Grace Church Born Of Schism In Methodism Is Century Old

Church Claims First Elected President, First Bishop Elected From Denomination

Many Sons Of Church Have Moved To Important Stations In The Methodist Protestant Denomination. Seven Ministers Served During Past Quarter Of Century. Membership Total Unchanged

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alterations were made by Rev. G. W. Haddaway and Rev. E. D. Stone.

Two Annual Conferences have been held in the church, in 1879 and 1892.

A brief notice of the ministers through whose faithful teaching the Church has grown. The well known scholastic ability of the Centreville congregation was early recognized by the Annual Conference and the most able men of the Conference were assigned. Upon reference to the minutes we find the names of the Reeses, Vardin, Stockton, Collins, Kinsley, Webster, J. J. Murray, Bordley Southerland, Drinkhouse, Hammond, Roby J. T. Murray, L. V. Bates, Bowers, and a host of others. An array of talent but seldom found in the records of any church. They were men wholly consecrated to their high calling and under whose preaching scores and hundreds were brought into the church.

And lastly, the men and women of saintly lives who were ever ready to make any needed sacrifice for the promotion of the Church they loved. A noble few may be mention for their especial devotion to their church, the Hoppers, Harpers, Storys, Gibsons, Ashcoms, McFeelys, Jumps, Prices, Turpins, Georges, McCabes, Wrights, Thompsons, Straughns, and many more whose names are found in the old church register, men of culture and social standing in the county.

I had forgotten to name those who from our communion gave their consecrated lives to the active ministry of the Church. They are: C. M. Thompson, W. J. Floyd, J. L. Straughn, T. R. Woodford and J. H. Straughn.

As a result of the faithful labors of these devoted ministers and laymen, we of today have indeed a goodly heritage of which we should be justily proud.

Grace Church Today

By The Rev. L. Colvin Randall

"Tempus fugit." Since the writing of the aforegoing paragraphs twenty-nine years have become history. The names of some of the contemporaries of that day are now but in memory, while others have advanced to more honored and responsible station in the community. Some have even been recognized by an ever enlarging sphere. As the name of the State's Attorney of the time comes to mind, he may be observed today on the bench of the Circuit Court, while the Hon. J. Frank Harper has served the county as its Senator, and the State in capacity of Chairman of is Public Service Commission. The pastor at the time, The Reverend R. L. Shipley, has served his conference in some of its best known charges, and as is Secretary for a number of years; and the denomination as the Editor of its official organ, The Methodist Protestant-Recorder, fulfilling the promise that his literary interests then foretold: in this capacity Doctor Shipley still serves.

During the intervening years seven ministers have served as pastors of the appointment, while in the year 1929-1930 three others supplied its pulpit. While all have made their contribution of loving service, each has added of his peculiar talent. As the aforegoing records makes mention of the material improvements in the property, we have here to recall that during the pastorate of the Rev. George M. Clayton, an assignment of three years beginning in 1921, extensive repairs were made including the installation of the present Moller pipe organ; and during each pastorate the membership was noticeably increased. Or, it might better be said "changed", for though new names were added to the records, the toll exactly by the years has kept the size of the membership at an approximate balance, and that not large. In spite of this its faithful membership and corps of workers., financially assisted by requests of some who have been called home, and who through their thoughtfulness have labored though they be "absent in the flesh," have served a very definite and desirable purpose in the community. The measure of this usefulness none can estimate.

Not only has Grace Church served the sphere, but its emissaries have gone forth to distant points, and others connected directly or indirectly have served in its Master's service. As the sun arising casts its rays the spire of Grace Church may be said to commune with "those we've loved long since and lost awhile." Among them three lie buried who gave themselves in full time Christian service—The Reverend George Edwin Brown, who, though he came from our neighboring Hayden community, is claimed as our foster-son, and as one who served well and was ever obedient to "the heavenly vision." There too lies The Reverend Eddie Howard Van Dyke, outstanding among his services being twenty-six years in mission field of the Church in Japan, he too is a foster-son. Having served the charge from 1870 to 1874, (it being his first appointment) when it was a part of the old circuit which covered the entire county, and when it was known as Queen Anne Circuit, The Reverend Frank Thomas Tagg, D.D., was returned in death to rest in the nearby Chesterfield Cemetery in 1923. Doctor Tagg's fifty-three years in the ministry were spent in six other pastorates, for seven years as Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions; and from 1893 to 1916, as Editor of the church's official organ, The Methodist Protestant. In 1888, Dr. Tagg was the denomination's first delegate to an Economical Missionary Conference in Exeter Hall, London.

The first section of this story of Grace Church mentions the names of two sons, then young in the ministry of the church, who have in these later years brought honor through their labors, and contributed largely of their denomination's history during the last quarter of century. At the time that the first section was written Thomas Reeves Woodford, who entered the conference in 1899, was Agent of the Baltimore Book Concern, now the Methodist Publishing House, of Baltimore. From 1913 to 1916 he served again in the pastorate, after which time he entered the service of The Board of Home Missions, at the Alvan Drew School, Pine Ridge, Kentucky. Becoming the Superintendent of this mountain school which had a speaking acquaintance with mountain feuds, Doctor Woodford labored abundantly and sacrificially, also successfully, there, until a few years ago when again the pastorate called, but the mountains were in his soul, and in that of his life companion, herself a native to these parts. There they now reside. It was a happy occasion when in the morning service of June 25, just past, Doctor Woodford gratified his soul's longing to come home to give account of his stewardship, and to inspire even his younger spiritual brothers and sisters, some of whom he had never before seen, with his sincere and devoted spirit.

Grace Church, while honoring not one child above another, has one son whom the church as a denomination has signally honored. Or, as he would prefer to vew it, the church has seen fit to call to varied tasks and responsibilities—James Henry Straughn, who after fitting himself for the Church's ministry ,has seen service in seven of the larger churches as their pastor; been an active leader in the young people's activities of the conference; President of West Lafayette College; President of The Maryland Annual Conference; Group Leader and Promotional Secretary of The General Conference of The Methodist Protestant Chruch; and, in order, Treasurer and President of The General Conference. The primary interest of his administration as President of The General Conference, by its authorization, has been the approach to the unon of Methodism. In its consummation in the Uniting Conference of Methodism at Kansas City, Missouri, he was elected, on Thursday, April 27, 1939; and on Sunday, April 30, 1939, was consecrated to the "office and work of a Bishop" in the new, The Methodism Church. In addition to these and other places of honor and responsibility, Doctor Straughn has served for years as a Trustee of The Western Maryland Colleeg; and for a number of years as the President of its Board of Trustees, during which time he has shared with others the concerns of a rapid expansion program. On Mother's Day this year, the first Sabbath after the close of the Uniting Conference, May 14, 1939, Bishop Straughn received three children as probationers on confession of faith, and two adult members by transfer, into the Grace Methodist Church. As with the return of Doctor Woodford, so the returning of Bishop Straughn to his home church is regarded as of special significance. Reflecting upon these occasions, n which sorrow, joy, thankfulness, and reconsecration seem commingled, the spiritual character of their returns becomes the more impressive.

Could we in fairness do so, many other names of clergy and laity alike, might well be selected to add to those names already mentioned. But they are all too many, for there are those who have been called ,some to be officers of the Boards of Stewards, Trustees, and Education; officers of the Sabbath School, Ladies' Aid Society, Grace Gleaners, Ushers Union, Missionary Society, Christian Endeavor Societies; members of Boards and Committees; and teachers in the Sabbath and Vacation Bible Schools. And as "they also serve who only stand and wait," so they have served who by their moral support and otherwise, with pres- and prayer, and in the making of music, have "done what" they "could."

In official capacity today these persons carry on the duties handed down by those who have gone on before: Board of Stewards—J. Hall Barton, President; Milton W .Seney, Vice-President; Roy H. Wilson, Secretary; William Hall Green, Treasurer; W. Lloyd Ford, Harry B. Towers, Roy Blunt, John Cannon, Emory Roe. Board of Trustees—John Cannon, President; J. Hall Barton, Secretary; R. Carroll Wilson, Secretary; W. Lloyd Ford, Percy Tucker, William H. Carter, Roy Blunt, Philemon H. Thompson, Earl R. Bishop. Board of Education—Mrs. Percy Tucker, President; Miss Ruth Rittenhouse, Secretary; Roy Blunt, Superintendent of Sabbath School; Mrs. Bessie Kinnamon; The Minister. Secretary of the Quarterly Conference, Mrs. Ruth Rittenhouse. Ladies' Aid Society—Mrs. Sadie B. Gafford, President. Grace Gleaners—Mrs. Elmer Kessler, President. Women's Missionary Society—Lady Visitor To The Home For The Mrs. J. Thomas Holland, President; Aged—Mrs. William H. Carter. Sabbath School Staff—Roy Blunt, Superintendent; Mrs. Roy Blunt, Secretary-Treasurer; Merwin Bartlett, Mrs. Sadie B. Gafford, Miss Gwendolyn Eichorn, Mrs. Leonard Renshaw; Misses Ruth Rittenhouse, Ivy Jewell, Grace Morris, Mildred Woodrow, Henritta Benny, and Betty Blunt. Junior Church Director—Miss Helen Willerton. Junior Church Board—Harry Roe, President. Organist—Mrs. Mamie S. Bright. Minister—Rev. L. Colvin Randall, S. T. B.

While Grace Church prefers to serve rather than be first, there are two firsts that we proudly mention, especially in the light of the history of the denomination. In recording a story of the First General Conference of The Methodist Protestant Church it is noted, quote: "When they came to elect a permanent president the first choice was also a layman, Judge P. B. Hopper, of Maryland, but he pleaded professional duties that would prevent him from serving . . . And it may be said with confidence that the selection of either —or Judge Hopper would have been not only fitting, but would have reflected honor on the Conference itself." As the first elected president of the new church in 1828, even though he declined to serve, was a layman of Centreville, so the first elected Bishop of the new church in 1939 was first a layman of the Centreville Church.

Even as deep emotions were felt in the early history when the course was one of separation, so they are felt today in this new period of transition in the opposite direction. The church fathers in the early part of the eighteenth century were moved to believe that God was leading them; we today believe that He was. The leadership of this nineteenth century are likewise confident of divine guidance, before which all our human plans and wills give way, as when The Christ said, "Not My Will, But Thine Be Done."

Old Dudley's Chapel Was Cradle Of Methodism In Queen Anne's

Joseph Hartley, Early Minister, Forbidden To Preach. Records Show Church Started In 1783. Many Changes Made During Passage Of Century

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the door which originally had led to the old vestry and Dudley's saw her floor completely carpeted for the first time. The total cost of the changes at this time was $450, which was subscribed on the day of re-opening.

Three institutions, dear to many hearts, today, resemble each other in the period of their history and in their struggles. Our nation, which signed her first treaty of peace in 1782; Dudley's Chapel, built in 1783; the Methodist Episcopal Church, organized Christmas, 1784. All three began in a struggle and alike have weathered the storms. Each split open the rock of slavery or the status of the negro among us. Each divided; in 1860, the nation; in 1844, the Methodist Episcopal denomination; in 1869, Dudley's Chapel. In each case, the contest was years in coming to a head, and through it all, there were brave men and true on each side.

In 1875, there happened an incident in Dudley's which illustrates the loyalty of Methodist ministers to the word of God, and the story which follows will show the mellow heart characteristic of many a Methodist layman. The Rev. W. B. Walton was presiding here, and in the midst of his sermon declared, that in the light of scripture, the black man in that gallery was a brother to the man sitting down here. Mr .Walton was to go home for dinner that day with Mr. Joseph Smith, who lived in Double Creek, and from there would go to his afternoon appointment at Union Church. Immediately after service, Mr. Smith jumped in his carriage and drove off. The minister after exchanging the usual greetings jumped in his carriage and drove after Mr. Smith. To reach Mr. Smith's house, it was necessary to pass through five or six gates. Each of these, Mr. Smith shut in the very teeth of the oncoming man of God. Both unharnessed and stabled their horses and went to the parlor without exchanging words. At dinner, little was said. After dinner, the Rev. Mr. Walton suggested prayer before leaving for Union Church. The preachers of that day would not leave a house without prayer and it was welcomed by the laity. When they arose from their knees, Mr. Smith was in tears, and the good old layman insisted that the preacher must come to his house on the morrow. The next day, pastor and friend spent together one of those happy times then more common than now and as the minister returned home the springs were groaning beneath the weight of hams, and the many good things which Mr. Smith had placed in the pastor's carriage.

With the outbreak of the Civil War the strife intensified. A class-leader, calling upon a brother for a testimony was greeted with the words, as the man addressed jumped to his feet: "I don't want any black Republicans to call my name." Another class-leader, calling prayer meeting, announced as his first hymn the lines of a hymn still in our hymnals:

"Show pity, Lord, O Lord forgive!
Let a repenting rebel live."

At the words, "a repenting rebel," a brother Smith bolted for the door, others followed, and the entire congregation left the house—the leader following and explaining that he was innocent of all offense, and did not really know that the words, "a repenting rebel" were in the hymn. After an hour of wrangling the congregation returned and there was a half hour of a rather cool prayer meeting.

As the Civil War drew to a close and it was evident that the South had lost their cause, the majority of the trustees of Dudley's vented their spite on the congregation of ex-slaves and free negroes, who for three-quarters of a century had worshipped with the congregation and held their class meetings in the church vestry, but always under a white person as class leader. Many of the white members of the congregation used to go to the vestry to see the negroes worship. But in March, 1865, the colored people were notified that they could no longer hold class nor worship God in the vestry after the first day of the next September. A request made in August for an extension of time was refused, and the poor negroes rolled together logs for pews and worshipped under the large trees to the rear of the church, while God blessed them, and the whites, who had driven them from the church, often too few in numbers to hold service, stood around and looked on.

On June 5, 1868, the "Battle of Antietam" was fought in Dudley's Chapel. That day the trustees met, and many others were there through interest. A hot debate followed. The entire history of that strife is preserved on the official record. Suffice it to say that the result was the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, of Sudlersville. Now the last vestiges of that struggle are fading. Blue and gray met again at Gettysburg on the third of July, and Pickett's men again emerged from the woods and charged up the hill to the stone wall at the "Bloody-Angle," and again they were met by the Philadelphia Brigade, but this time, instead of with bullets and shrapnel with handshakes and medals of honor. Church North and Church South long since have exchanged greetings and all one another as sisters and their ministers greet one another as true apostles of the great Wesley.

This year the wounds have been healed. This and the last traces of division banished when all three branches of Methodism united in a single Methodist Church.

Barclay Named For 1st Settler

Barclay, a small hamlet, nestled among the fertile farms of the upper part of the county is a self-sufficing little town of which its inhabitants are justly proud.

Not much is known of the early history of Barclay but we judge that its beginning must have been many years ago. We do know, however, that this quaint little town received its name from a Pennsylvania man who settled at this site many years ago and was probably the first settler of the town. This man's name was Barclay Roberts.

Barclay is a very religious town. For the one hundred and twenty-five inhabitants, there are two churches, the M. E. and the M. E. South. Of the M. E. Church, there is Rev. W. O. Hackett of Henderson and Rev. J. W. Newnam of Ingleside for the M. E. South Church.

There are approximately twenty-five homes in Barclay. For these twenty-five homes there are numerous stores and other business establishments presenting a picture of industry, self-sufficing and thriving. Of these businesses, the A. and C. Candy Company is probably the most known, distributing their products throughout the state. Booker and Wallace are the owners of the largest general merchandise store in the town. Price Cronshaw runs a service station there while the Ingleside Milling Company operate a large branch in this town. There is also the hardware company of Phillips and Phillips. Mr. J. L. Wallace, of Booker and Wallace, is also the postmaster for the town.

In this small town, there is also a two-room seven-grade school. There are two teachers, Miss Josephine Beatty and Miss Katherine Sudler.

With this short description, we leave Barclay for we feel that its beauty, serenity and friendly people speak well for themselves. One visit to Barclay could tell one more of its wonderful qualities than words could describe.

Robert T. Newell Has Active Part In Civic Affairs

Centers Interest In Providing Greater Opportunities For Young People

Princec of good fellows and worker for all community projects is Robert T. (Bob) Newell, of Windy Hill farm, secretary-treasurer of the Queen Anne's County Farm Bureau and manager of its store.

Bob was born in Wilmington, Delaware, on June 27, 1894, but he is a product of Philadelphia schools. He graduated from West Philadelphia high school and Strayers Business College. The course of the years brought him to Queen Anne's county where his is a solid, substantial citizen, possessor of an attractive home on his 36-acre Windy Hill lot on the left bank of the Corsica river, and active in the community affairs about him.

After spending years electing others head of the Rotary Club and content to be a director only, Bob was chosen president of the Rotary Club and made his year one of purposely cooperation in business, civic and community matters.

He is treasurer and a director of the Centreville Free Public Library, Chairman of the Tri-County Boy Scout District, member of the Centreville Recreational Committee, and vestryman of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

He is a firm believer in better educational facilities in Queen Anne's county and has been active in the Parent-Teachers Association of the Centreville Elementary School. When the project for repairing and enlarging Centreville high school came up, Bob was one of the earliest advocates and was chairman of the original building committee which drew up plans that are beginning to take shape now. The renovation is underway and the addition is to come.

Some eight years ago when the Rotary Club established its first Christmas celebration for children Bob was in on the idea and was the first Santa Claus, a part to which his figure and dispositon well fitted him. Bob is interested in children, interested in creating opportunities for them, whether it is through libraries, Boy Scout work, recreational work, fitting up a swim place like Morris Beach, or better schools.

He is secretary of the Centreville Chamber of Commerce and representative of the County Farm Bureau on the Eastern Shore Association of Cooperatives.

Jovial at all times and possessor of an inexhaustible fund of stories, Bob confesses to but few hobbies. Boating is his favorite. He places a good cabin cruiser hardly second in is mind to a good car. He likes movies with substance, a historical film or a sound play. He is a member of the Little Theatre group, but shies from the footlights.

Bob has been married twenty-one years. His wife is the former Miss Ruth Matthews of Media, Pa. They have three sons, Robert T. jr., Donald E., and Richard G. Newell.

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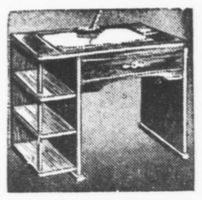

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