

# THE CHURCHES OF DELAWARE

by

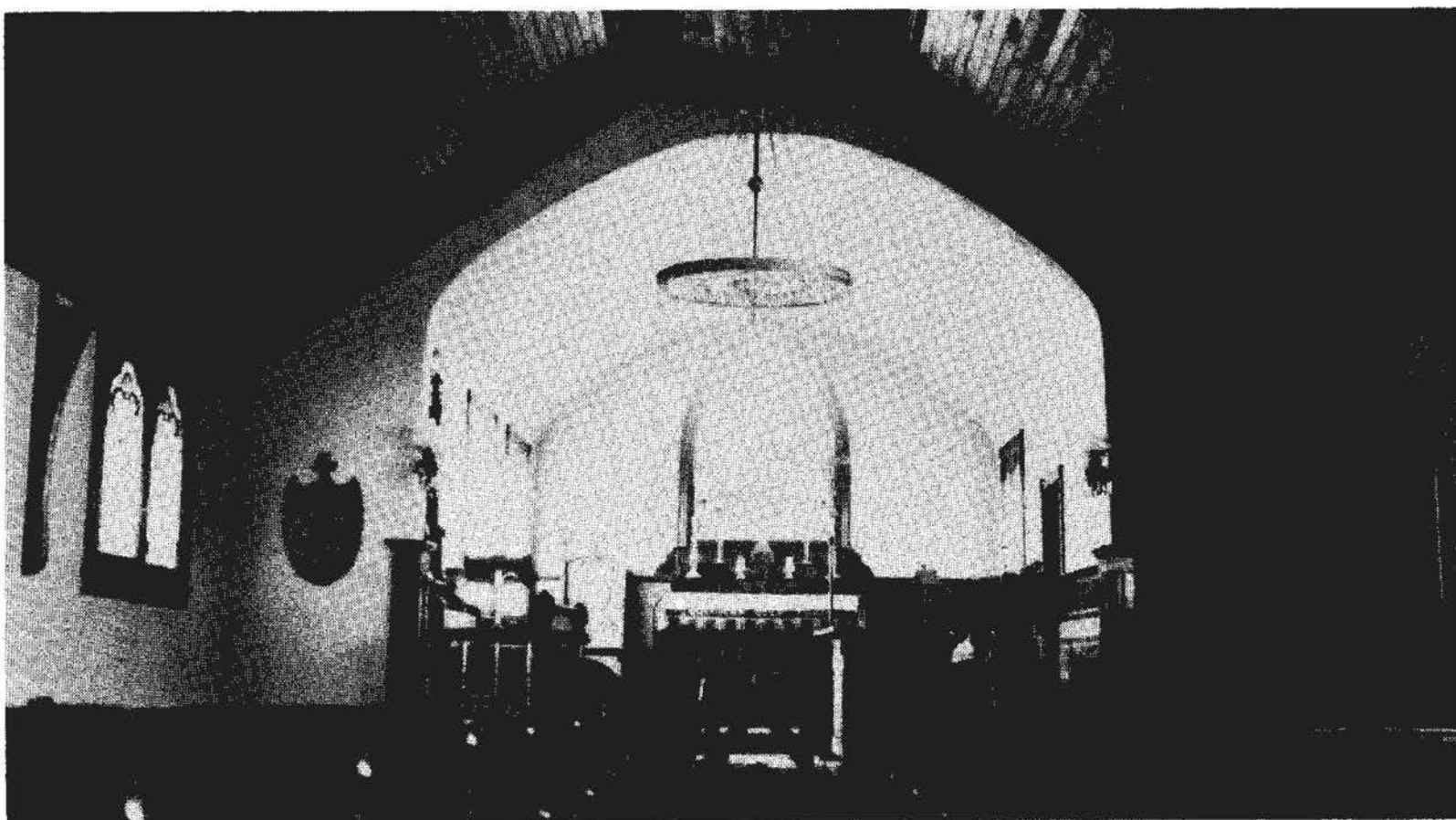
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*A history, in brief, of the nearly 900 churches  
and former churches in Delaware as  
located by the Author.*

1947



ST. PAUL'S P. E. CHURCH, CAMDEN  
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CAMDEN FRIENDS' MEETING-HOUSE  
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Whatcoat Methodist Church (M.E.) located at Camden was organized in 1791, at which time Daniel Lowber gave them the use of one-half an acre of land upon which to build a church. Mr. Lowber formally deeded the land to "the people called Methodists" on July 27, 1796. This half-acre is included in the old graveyard in the southern part of the town. On this land, a small chapel was built. There was a gallery for the colored people who worshipped with, and received the sacraments of the church from the white ministers. On Apr. 24, 1813, an additional half-acre was deeded to the trustees, to enlarge the graveyard, by Benj. Brady, et al. Francis Asbury spoke in the chapel on Apr. 12, 1815.

This chapel was used until 1857, when the present commodious brick church was built. The site had been purchased on July 5, 1856, from Thos. Mifflin. The church was dedicated on July 26, 1857. The services were conducted by the Revs. Wesley Kenney, W. H. Brisbane and R. W. Todd, the pastor. On Oct. 24, 1857, the old chapel, benches and fixtures were sold at a public sale. Two years later, during a severe storm, the north end of the new church was partly blown down. The damage was repaired and the church was rededicated during January, 1860.

After major improvements, the church was rededicated on Sun., Nov. 12, 1865, by the Rev. Andrew Manship assisted by the Rev. Mr. Hammersley, the pastor. After being renovated, the church was reopened on Sun., Oct. 27, 1867, by the Rev. Mr. Schreck. Early in 1869, a parsonage and a new organ were purchased.

The church was incorporated on May 16, 1923. The parsonage, on Main St., was purchased, from Mary E. Graham, on May 23, 1923. During 1940, extensive improvements were made to the interior of the church.

At least a portion of the old church, built more than a century ago, is now a dwelling occupied by colored persons. In the old graveyard at the southern end of the town, the oldest tombstone that the writer could find is over the grave of Robert McClyment who died on Mar. 24, 1814. Formerly there were a number of oaken grave markers but these have all disappeared.

**St. Paul's P. E. Chapel in Camden.** The effort to organize this church was started on Trinity Sunday, June 7, 1868. The meetings were held in Sarde's Hall. It was organized as a mission of Christ Church, in Dover, on July 17, 1868. A church site was secured in 1890 and the chapel was built in 1891.

In 1895-96 a window in memory of the Rev. Lewis W. Gibson was unveiled. A new organ was installed in 1906-07. Three memorial windows were unveiled in 1907-08 and additional land was purchased. In 1908-09 chandeliers and chancel lights were presented by Mrs. Caulk of Milford. The church was renovated and the parish-house was built in 1913. On Dec. 7, 1913, the church was consecrated and the parish-house was dedicated by Bishop Frederick J. Kinsman. A new pulpit was installed and it was blessed by Bishop Kinsman on Dec. 13, 1914. In 1922-23, a chancel window in memory of Mrs. Julia Lord was unveiled. A credence shelf was installed in 1927.

Beginning in 1890 services were conducted in Wyoming for a short time.

**Camden Friend's Meeting-House** was the last Meeting to be organized in Kent County but, in the meantime, it has absorbed all of the other Meetings in the County. In 1805, the present meeting-house was built for religious and school purposes. The deed for the land was executed by Jonathan and Patience Hunn on July 6, 1806, and the plot was described as being located on the road leading from the village to the poor-house. This Meeting was an offspring

of Motherkill Meeting. A few of the school desks and benches can still be seen in the school-room on the second floor. This school was discontinued in 1875.

The Meeting was incorporated on Feb. 13, 1888. This meeting-house is unique in several of its features. The style of architecture is different from the usual Friend's Meeting-House, having no porches, a single double-door and a gambrel roof with dormer windows. Then, to top it off, the meeting-house faces north instead of south. The great majority of meeting-houses, for some undetermined reason, were built facing the south. The old horse-sheds have been removed. John Hunn, Governor of Delaware, 1901-05, is buried in the adjoining burying-ground. The use of foot-stones is noticeable. The oldest tombstone is that of Jonathan H. Jenkins who died on Aug. 11, 1837. A memorial to Warner Mifflin stands in the burying-ground. This stone was originally set up in Motherkill burying-ground where Mr. Mifflin is buried in an unmarked grave. When Motherkill burying-ground became extremely neglected the stone was moved to its present location in 1937.

The meeting-house is equipped with candles in wall-sconces but it is doubtful if they are ever used as the Friends seldom hold meetings at night.

**Camden Baptist Church.** In October, 1869, the Baptists in the neighborhood of Camden purchased Wyoming College, which included a chapel. This chapel was dedicated on Sun., Dec. 5, 1869, by the Rev. Dr. Jay T. Backus and the Rev. H. G. Weston of Crozer Seminary. This was used as their meeting place. On Dec. 15, 1880, they were incorporated as the Wyoming Baptist Church. On Dec. 28, 1880, they purchased, from George Parris, a plot of land in Camden upon which a church was built. It was dedicated on Sept. 4, 1881, by the Revs. Mr. Heath and James Hope. The last service was held here on July 14, 1912, and today the building is occupied as a beauty parlor and apartments.

**St. John's Reformed Church,** at Wyoming, was organized on July 18, 1869, in the Good Templar's Hall. Meetings were held in the schoolhouse and in Ellison's Hall. Ground was broken for a church on May 11, 1872. The corner-stone was laid on June 9, 1872, by the Rev. Dr. E. V. Gearhart. Josiah Besemer and Milo H. Grop donated the church site on Layton Ave., at Broad St., on Feb. 18, 1874. The church was dedicated on Apr. 19, 1874, by Dr. Gearhart. It was incorporated on Feb. 6, 1877. In 1922, the building was sold, moved to the main street and converted into a double dwelling.

**St. Paul's Christian Church,** at Wyoming, was organized in 1913. The church was incorporated on June 11, 1913. On June 12, 1913, they purchased a building at Mechanic and Walnut Sts. from John T. Marker. It was remodeled for church purposes. After a few years' activity the effort was abandoned. The building is now occupied by the Knights of the Golden Eagle.

A Church of God in Christ, colored, is located at Camden.

**Wyoming Methodist Church (M.E.).** In 1856, when the Delaware Railroad was built about one mile west of Camden, the station at that point was named "Camden Station." In 1865, a town was laid out and given the name "Wyoming." Later in that year, John T. Jakes started a subscription for the purpose of erecting a building to be used for Sunday School meetings. A plank chapel was built but before it was dedicated it was taken over by the Methodist Episcopal Conference. Named the "Wyoming M. E. Church," the dedication