



Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, Oct. 16, 1889.

1789.

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—THE—
CENTENNIAL SERVICES

OF

Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church,

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE.

OCTOBER 13-20, 1889.

Rev. JOHN D. C. HANNA, Editor.

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1889.

Park, one in the neighborhood of Cookman, one Thirteenth and King, and the improvements, new houses and Children's Home make a Methodist church a necessity in East Lake Park. \$5,000 a year for the next six years will enable these communities to build six Methodist churches which will become centers of influence and power. In my judgment no wiser investment of capital for the extension of Christ's Kingdom and the salvation of souls, could be made by Methodist laymen. I plead for the poor. Extend to them a helping hand. Neither pauperize nor pension them, but help and trust them. Put upon them the responsibility. There is nothing like it to strengthen and build up. God trusted the fathers when they were poor. Many of their sons and daughters have grown rich. So that there are individual members of the Methodist church in this city who could do the work I have pointed out in the next six years if life should be continued with God's blessing upon their business, and be richer in spirit and happier in their life work. The generations to come would bless their memory. There is no higher tribute paid to man in the Gospel than that given by loving hearts, which said He hath built us a synagogue.

Standing between the century past and the century to come, I close this paper with the eloquent words of Bishop Foster as appropriate to Asbury Church as to the Methodism for which he wrote them:

"There is a glorious future for her of long and hallowed successes. Her brilliant morning is but the harbinger of a resplendent day. The marvels of her first century we may believe are but the precursors of the hallowed wonders she is to witness in the long march of the coming ages. If to-day suggests retrospect, it is no less a Pisgah of prospect. If it thrusts upon us memories of the struggles and victories past, it also beckons us on to the contemplation of the future. The *has been* is linked with the *will be*. As the old century recedes, the new advances. With grateful tears we wave farewell to the one and hold up signals of welcome to the other."

History of Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church.

BY THE REV. JOHN D. C. HANNA, PASTOR.

The century's history of Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, of the heroic efforts for her establishment, of the sacrifices endured for her advancement, of the magnificent results of her endeavors, is written in glowing characters on high, but cannot be fully betrayed at these services. It is a thrilling record of long preparation, mighty struggle, glorious victory. Whose soul is so dead as not to be stirred by the associations of this place, by the memories of the heroic days that now crowd upon us. From the pulpit of this church have spoken pastors whose voices have been the most powerful of the century, and whose saintly ministrations among the people have comforted the broken-hearted, raised the lowly, and encouraged the desponding. Thomas Ware, Ezekiel Cooper, Joseph Rustling, Levi Storks, Lawrence Laurensen, Henry White, Joseph Lybrand, Matthew Sorin, Solomon Sharpe, Robert Gerry, Anthony Atwood, Thos. J. Thompson, Wm. Cooper, Geo. Quigley, and many other equally great men, living and dead, have made these walls resound with their mighty appeals to men to be loyal to Christ. The church records bear the names of such men of God as Edward Worrell, Samuel Saffington, James A. Sparks, Henry J. Pepper, Miller Dunott, John Hagany, Thos. Young, Samuel Wood, John Taylor, James P. Merrihew, James Guthrie, Charles Farra, Wm. R. Cotter, Wm. Beggs, and a host of other godly men and saintly women, who long since have answered the roll on high; while in the tombs about us, beside these already named, sleep Jeremiah Dodsworth, John Bosler, Edward Kennard, Wm. Torbert, Jr., John Guyer, Lewis Ash-

ton, James Simpson, Jr., Charles Sanders, Edward H. Bonsal, George Young, David Webster, Curtis Rudolph, and other noted men and women of early Methodism who will have a triumphant resurrection when the trump of God shall sound. It is a great privilege to be permitted to gather here to-day to trace the feeble efforts of this society before this church was built, and review the dealings of God in century past.

Wilmington Methodism was born in 1766 or '67. At this time Capt. Thomas Webb, an officer in the British army, came from Philadelphia to Wilmington and preached under some trees near the corner of King and Kent streets (now King and 8th). This remarkable man, wherever he went, must have attracted great attention. Clad in the uniform of King George, but owing a higher allegiance to King Jesus, described by John Adams as "one of the most eloquent men he ever heard," still in the prime of life, preaching the heart-moving, all-embracing Gospel of the Methodists, no wonder he had earnest listeners whenever he preached, and stirred the souls and fortified the courage of the followers of Wesley in these days of constant strife. It does not require a vivid imagination to see him more than a century ago, within a few squares of this place, preaching the first Methodist sermon ever heard in Wilmington. The crowd gathered under the trees, study with curious interest the peculiar preacher delivering his strange truths; one eye blind, covered with a green shade, the other flashing fire or melting into tenderness as he presents the many-sided Gospel, his voice ringing out over the commons, his mien martial, his soul fearless, his form dilating under the marvelous power of the matchless truth, he is a fit messenger of God, and a man of whom we may well be proud as the founder of Methodism in our city. In these services John Thelwell, who kept a public house near the Lower Market, officiated as clerk and set the tunes to the hymns given out by Capt. Webb.

After these meetings had been held under the trees for a while, the first assemblage of Methodists worshiped in an upper story of Capt. Joseph Gilpin's storehouse on King street wharf. Here they remained a short time, until invited by John Thelwell to occupy his school-room. This staunch Methodist and unswerving friend of the church, and his daughter Deborah, or Miss Debby as she was called, had commenced teaching at the foot of Quaker Hill, but were soon promoted to the little Senate Chamber over the Market House. To this building, on the southeast corner of King and Third streets, afterwards used as a chair manufactory, where the office of the Daily Republican now stands, the Methodists accordingly moved. Meetings were also

occasionally held at the cedar cooper shop of Mr. Geo. Witsill, on Water street below Main (now Market). Sometimes the preachers administered the word in the upper and lower Market Houses.

It was in Mr. Thelwell's school-room, however, that the society obtained its first formation. John Thelwell, Deborah Thelwell, his daughter, Henry Colesbury, Betsy and Sarah Colesbury, John Miller, Thomas Webster, William Wood, I. Jaquet, George Witsill, David Ford, Samuel Foudry, James Bell, and others, were among the earlier members.

At this time the society was connected with Chester Circuit, and persons as distant as Bethel held their membership at Wilmington. The preachers appointed to Chester Circuit preached at Wilmington in their regular tour of their work. Many men of note preached Christ with power to this small society in those early days. John King, in 1769, was appointed to labor in and about Wilmington. In 1772 Francis Asbury preached for the first time at Wilmington to a few persons. In 1780 Benjamin Abbatt, in his regular monthly round of a circuit of more than 28 appointments, and extending from the Delaware to the Susquehanna, and from New Castle far up into Pennsylvania, found his second appointment at Wilmington. He preached at the dwelling of J. Stidham to a small but attentive congregation, some of whom were very happy. One woman lay under the Divine power for three hours, and said God had given her a clean heart. She continued to cry, "O, Daddy Abbatt, how can I live! O that I could go to Jesus." The rejoicing was continued all night. On his second round he preached in the old storehouse of Joseph Gilpin's, on the wharf, to which reference was before made. Mr. Abbatt says in his journal: "Some people went through the town and said there was an old sailor cursing and swearing at a terrible rate. This brought the people together from every quarter, and the house and wharf were crowded. Some laughed, some mocked, and others wept; some were awakened, and inquired what they should do to be saved. I told them to look to Jesus."

Celebrated among the pioneers of Methodism was Harry, the black traveling companion and servant of Francis Asbury. "He was small, very black, keen-eyed, and possessing great volubility of tongue. Although so illiterate that he could not read, he was one of the most popular preachers of the age." Harry preached once, at least, to the Methodists of Wilmington. On the occasion of one of Asbury's visits to this charge, it was announced that the Bishop would preach. Methodism was most unpopular here in that day, and many would have felt much more disgraced at being seen at a Methodist meeting.

than to have been caught in a bar-room or on the race track. But as the Bishop was to preach, a number of citizens, who did not usually attend the meeting-house, concluded to go at least this once. When they arrived, the room was crowded, and many stood outside. They were compelled, therefore, to take a position from which they could not see the speaker, though they could hear distinctly every word. For some reason, Harry was put up to preach, and these visitors standing outside, were carried away with what they supposed to be the Bishop's eloquence. Before they left the place they complimented the speaker by saying with much enthusiasm, "If all Methodist preachers could preach like the Bishop, we should like to be constant hearers." "The Bishop," exclaimed a by-stander, "why, that was not the Bishop, but the Bishop's colored servant that you heard." This only served to raise the Bishop higher in their estimation; "for," they reasoned, "if such be the servant, what must the master be." The fact is, Harry was a much more popular speaker than the Bishop, and could always attract as large audiences as the Bishop, and frequently larger.

Besides Bishop Asbury, who always took a great interest in this struggling society, and often preached here, Dr. Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and other distinguished men of the early times, made them occasional visits. Indeed, Richard Whatcoat was Presiding Elder of the district in which Wilmington was included in 1790, the year after the church was built.

In 1785, a few days after the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a revival of religion blessed the Methodists of Wilmington. Thomas Coke visited the Peninsula after the adjournment of the Christmas Conference, and records in his journal that when he visited Wilmington, a revival was in progress. Doubtless, the addition then made to the membership, crowded the humble room in which they still held their meetings, and led them to discuss the propriety of having a Methodist meeting house in this city.

In the period from 1766 or 1767, when Captain Webb first preached at Wilmington, to 1789, when the church was built, there was a small but heroic band of men and women, who, in spite of opposition and persecution, maintained the faith as preached by the Wesleyans. The history of their struggles to continue their society, of the trials they endured and the shame they suffered, of the devoted men, who, without home, comforts, or salary, ministered to them in holy things, would, no doubt, make a thrilling story, but no complete account has been left of these early times. Enough light comes from the general history of early Methodism to show us that the fathers and mothers of this church, were no less heroic than were those whose names are more

conspicuous in history. On our mind is imprinted the picture of a little band, numbering 10 or 12 at one time, and never more than 40, toiling against the enmity of the world about them, facing the malice of men and devils, regardless of sneers, obloquy, and shame, until at last their faith is rewarded, and one Sabbath morning, a hundred years ago, they sit in their own church, with their beloved Bishop before them preaching the dedicatory sermon, and their hearts all aglow with gratitude to God for his goodness, while they sing,

"Here I'll raise mine Ebenezer,
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home."

On May 12, 1789, a lot of ground near the south east corner of Walnut and Third streets was purchased from Caleb Way and Sarah, his wife, for the sum of £105, for the purpose of erecting thereon a house of worship. It was conveyed to the following persons as trustees, viz: H. Colesbury, John Miller, Thos. Webster, John Thelwell, Samuel Foudry, Richard Sneath, Geo. Witsell, James Bell and John Jaquet, Jr.

In 1823, the society bought from William Simmons, through Edward Worrell, who afterwards made a liberal gift to the church on this purchase, a house and lot on the south east corner of Walnut and Third streets for \$405. The church lot was further enlarged in 1838 by the purchase of a piece of ground south of the church property for \$675. The cemetery then had the same dimensions as at present. The Rev. J. Rustling says in 1834: "The ground at the corner of Walnut and Third streets, after furnishing a situation for the church, the school-house and the sexton's house, serves as an eligible place for interment for the different families connected with the society. It lies eastward from the buildings, (enlarged, as we have seen in 1838,) and gradually declines toward a small stream that winds its way to the Christiana River." Subsequently a sewer took the place of the stream, and a stone wall was extended along the east and south boundaries, and the ground graded. "In this ground," continues Mr. Rustling, "repose, under their respective grassy hillocks, the ashes of many who were the original members of the church, as well also as of many who have since occupied their places. Here lieth Colesburys, Thelwells, Witsills, Woods, Whalers, McLanes, Joneses, Worrells and many others. The mortal remains of I. Jarrell, once a distinguished itinerant minister, rest in this field of the tombs. Here, likewise, are portions of the families of several ministers, who from time to time officiated in the church. Miller, Kendale, Smith, McCombs, Wiggins,

Rustling and other names are here represented. Several of those last mentioned lie near the east end of the church, and some of the former lie under it, the building by enlargement extended over their graves.'"

It was on this lot of ground that in 1789, less than four years after the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the society proceeded to rear a house for the worship of God according to Methodist usages. It was a plain and unpretending structure. No one then dreamed of the future glory of Methodism, but what a harvest has resulted from this timely planting! The building which stood back 10 feet from the building line, fronted as now on Walnut street, and was about 35 feet square, with a gallery in the west end, and a peculiar old-fashioned, high pulpit at the east. This pulpit was about 4 feet wide, with its floor 5 feet above the main floor. On the north side was a door to which five steps led, and the preacher shut himself in after mounting to this elevation. The south side of this box-pulpit was closed, and there were no steps on that side. Edward Worrell said, because of its one-sided appearance: "That it reminded him of a crab with but one leg," and offered, if permitted, to put steps on the south side. The preacher had a kind of inclined shelf in front of him, 4 feet high, so high that if he stooped, he could not be seen, and yet not high enough to prevent him pounding the Bible while he expounded the truth. Below the pulpit floor, it was open to the floor of the church, making a sort of open cupboard. In this the leader of the singing sat, and when the hymn was announced from above, after the hum of his tuning fork had died away, he came out from this retreat and led the music; when the hymn had been sung, he retired to the same quarters until needed again. John Thelwell was the first who thus literally sat at the preacher's feet, and Samuel Sappington enjoyed the same honor for many years. It was not till 1840 that a modern pulpit was introduced. The seats were simply a board bench with a single-rail back. A partition 4 feet high ran down the center of the church to divide the men from the women. When services were in progress the members of one sex were completely hidden from the members of the other. This partition was even continued through the front yard, where a fence 7 feet high extended from the church to a brick wall of the same height, that then stood in front of the church. A lady and gentleman coming to church together separated on the pavement, and entered through their respective gates the church yard, nor did they see each other again until, the service being over, they met again on the pavement.

In the Summer of 1789 the corner-stone of the church was laid. John Lednum, in 1860, met Mr. Harris, then 84 years old, who said he

well remembered the laying of the corner-stone of the first Asbury. "The preacher," said he, "knelt upon the stone, which was laid in a large deep hole prepared for the purpose, and offered up prayer. This, with the singing of a hymn, constituted the religious services of the occasion." Wm. Jessup was the stationed preacher at that time, and Henry Willis and Lemuel Green were the Presiding Elders of the district, which then extended from the Delaware to the Ohio Rivers. It was probably one of these brethren who laid the corner-stone.

It was here that 100 years ago to-day Francis Asbury came to dedicate the first Methodist church of Wilmington. It was a time of thrilling import to that little band of early Methodists, it is a time of great interest to us, their sons and daughters, who look back over the century. There were gathered the men and women who for 20 years and more had struggled with open enmity, secret slander, vile abuse, sneers and persecution to preserve the faith delivered to them by Capt. Webb. There were the men who, because they taught that all men might be saved by the atonement of Christ, were derided as free-willers; because they declared that man could be saved from all sin in this life, were ridiculed as perfectionists; because they testified that a man might know his sins forgiven, awakened the bitter enmity, the wicked revilings, and the unjust violence of the formalists about them, and because they dared defend these great doctrines of Methodism that are now preached from all the pulpits of the land, their lives were put in jeopardy every hour. On the lower floor most of the 43 white members were gathered, thrilled with the eloquence of the occasion, scarcely believing that the church was really theirs, while up in the little gallery, not less interested and perhaps more demonstrative, were the 19 colored members who had cast in their lot with the despised Methodists. Here, under the pulpit, sat John Thelwell, older in years, of course, and older far in experience and faith than when he pitched the tunes for Capt. Webb under the trees twenty years before. At this time his voice is heard performing the same office for Bishop Asbury, while the voices of the little company, blending in sacred song, sound out upon the solemn stillness of that Sabbath morn a prophecy of the song almost unceasing that should be heard in the coming century. On the right and left of the pulpit, in the old-fashioned amen corner are the oldest members of the church, the mothers of Israel, in plain garb and peaceful faces upturned on one side of the pulpit, and the fathers with words of encouragement for the preacher and gratitude to God in their souls, on the other side. Long before the hour of service, a throng of people, some drawn by curiosity, some by love, might be seen wending their way to this spot on which stood

the unpretending meeting house, until when the services commenced it is filled in every part.

But the center of this humble scene is Francis Asbury, standing to deliver the first gospel message heard in these walls. It would be delightful, could we draw the likeness of this great man as here a century ago he stood. It is known that in life he was very shy of having his picture taken. "Only by his good friend, Mr. Cannon, was he trapped into it, and then he fell a victim to his compassion. Mr. Cannon offered to make of a fine piece of velvet which he possessed, a vest for each of his preachers if Mr. Asbury would sit for his portrait. Asbury could not refuse such terms, and to this pleasant trick of the good Methodist tailor, are we indebted for the best, if not the only, reliable, original likeness of our great and good bishop." There he is as he looked as he stood in the little pulpit here a century ago, "erect, sinewy, with flesh of iron firmness, and nerves of steel; his countenance open, his head ample and well poised, eyes steady and mildly expressive, lips compressed, chin well set, his hair cut square across his forehead, and flowing gracefully behind his neck, he stands before us in the prime of manhood, just in his 44th year, thoughtful, religious, self-contained," a born leader of men. Let us pause a moment to look upon another picture of this great man, drawn in part by the pen of Prof. Little at the Centennial Conference of 1884: "He had a robust figure, a face of blended sweetness and severity, an eye that saw far more than it revealed, a voice steadied by an iron will, but tremulous with feelings that sometimes shook his soul as a reed is shaken by the wind. He had none of Robert Williams' wild earnestness; he was without the charm of Robert Strawbridge, or the gentle harmlessness of Richard Whatcoat. He had not the thorough humanness of Jessie Lee, nor the mystical tenderness and strength of Freeborn Garrettson.

"Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness, and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.'"

The son of an English gardener, he came to America when 26 years of age, to do the work of a missionary among his own race on this side of the water. Coke crossed the ocean eighteen times, but Asbury never went back home again, not even "to see his aged mother for whom he would have sold his last shirt, and parted with his last dollar." He had but one work—to win America

for Christ. "He traversed this land for nigh a half century amid heat and cold, rain and sunshine, often destitute of food and clothing and shelter, and could often say with Wordsworth's wanderer,

'Homeless near a thousand homes I stood.'

He was not a hater of beauty, much less of beautiful women, whose refined sense and affection render home the fairest and happiest domain of earth. But he was homeless, wifeless, like Paul, the apostle, for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Methodism was his second mother, his only wife, his riches, his home, his inheritance, his legacy, his all. He refused to bind a woman to his life of sacrifice, and the man whom little children ran to kiss and hug, was buried in a childless grave. He never shrank from danger or hardship, but his life was one of continuous toil, until at last rest itself could yield him no repose. A sort of spiritual Cromwell, compelling obedience at every cost to himself as well as others, Asbury could have broken his mother's heart to serve the cause for which he died daily."

This was the man who stood here one hundred years ago preaching God's word to the little flock, and who, as he dedicated in his Master's name their modest church, looked back over the struggles of these heroes, and said: "Thus far have we come after more than twenty years' labor." What an auspicious beginning! Do you wonder that this man stirred the infant society into a closer walk with God, and increased fidelity to Methodism? Who doubts that the imprint of that hand is felt upon the church to-day.

Though the Methodists now had a meeting house of their own, still the difficulties against which they had been contending for twenty years, were not removed. They seem, indeed, from the time of the building of the church to many years subsequent to have increased. The fluctuations of the membership show the struggles through which the society was passing. The 43 white members found upon the church-roll in 1789, though they had become 93 in 1791, when Thomas Ware was pastor, were reduced to 40 in 1796, during the pastorate of John Vanneman, and, though in several previous pastorates, there were over a hundred white members, yet as late as 1808, in Wm. Bishop's pastorate, but 99 were reported to the Conference. After that the society with a few fluctuations grew steadily.

In 1811, in consequence of this continuous increase, it was deemed necessary to make the first enlargement of the church. The wall where stood the old-fashioned high pulpit, was taken down, and moved 20 feet eastward, making the church 55 feet long by 35 feet wide.

During the 22 years between the building of the church in 1789, and its first improvement in 1811, despite the bitter opposition to the Methodists from all classes of people, the business of the society was transacted in a most careful manner. From the time the meeting house was erected to at least 1800, it was almost at the risk of their lives that our fathers and mothers repaired to this place to worship God. Thomas Ware, a great and good man, was pastor here in 1791, two years after the church was built. In his autobiography he refers to his work at Wilmington in these not very complimentary words: "This was my first station; but I sighed for the back-woods, which was paradise to me compared with this suffocating borough, infected with a mystical miasm on the subject of religion, which had a deleterious effect on many, and especially on the young. They had imbibed this moral poison until it broke out in supercilious contempt of all who were by one class denounced as hirelings and will-worshippers, and by another as free-willers and perfectionists. Hence, the house in which we worshiped was surrounded by hundreds of these sons of Belial night after night, while there were scarcely fifty within; and such were their character and conduct that females were afraid to attend our meetings at night, and we had no alternative but to commence service in time to dismiss the congregation before dark. Gladly would I have exchanged this, my first station, for the Western woods. I had, however, the pleasure of numbering among those of my charge some of the excellent of the earth, and much satisfaction in marking their growth in grace."

On September 23, 1800, the male members of the church were called together to take steps to prevent the further depredations of this mob. Because this gathering enables us to get a clear picture of the times, and because we may thus see the advancement in public sentiment in 89 years, I record in full the minutes of this meeting. Can it be possible that less than a century ago, in a country enjoying unusual freedom, in this our own city, such a meeting was a necessity? The proceedings are as follows:

"WILMINGTON, September 23, 1800.

"At a meeting of the male members of the Asbury Church in the borough of Wilmington, convened for the purpose of consulting what means would be best calculated to prevent in future the collecting of mobs and disorderly persons, from disturbing our public and private worship, which has been a growing evil since the year 1790, at which was present Caleb Kendall, preacher; Samuel Wood and George Jones, stewards; Allen McLane, John Thelwell, James Osborn, William McClung, Henry Witsel, James Payne, and Edward Worrell. After

appointing Caleb Kendall to the chair, and Edward Worrell clerk, the following resolution was entered into:

"WHEREAS, We have been long and grievously persecuted, and often interrupted in our public and private worship of Almighty God, we deem it highly expedient that some method should be adopted to protest against the insults of a relentless mob, and prevent in future the disorder that is often occasioned by the more decent part of the congregation.

"Resolved, That it is necessary that there be a committee of three persons appointed whose business shall be to take such measures as they (with the advice of a counsel) may think best calculated to prevent in future the evil complained of.

"Resolved, That Allen McLane, Edward Worrell, and James Payne, be a committee to carry into execution the foregoing resolution.

"In consequence of the foregoing meeting, the following notice was published in the newspaper called the Monitor:

"ADVERTISEMENT.

"The male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church who worship in the borough of Wilmington, assembled last evening to take into consideration the necessity of adopting such measures as may in future deter the infidel rabble from disturbing them in time of worship, which they have been in the habit of doing for some time back, by breaking the windows, stoning the preachers, casting nauseous reptiles, insects, and other filth in at the windows among the female part of the congregation, and otherwise intruding on the order of their church, in violation of the most sacred laws of a free people, which privilege all persons to worship Almighty God agreeable to the dictates of their own conscience.

"After maturely weighing every circumstance, and duly considering their repeated grievances, it was determined that, should they hereafter meet with any interruption at their place of worship, from any person whatever, resort will be had to the laws of the state, and prosecution commenced against the offenders."

What effect this action had cannot be determined by the records, except by their silence. Nothing more is said about the society being persecuted. The only actions in regard to order after this time, are such as might be passed by the church to-day, such as the preventing of standing in the vestibule, crowds upon the sidewalks, occasional rowdiness, and such like. We judge, therefore, that after this resolute action in 1800, our church enjoyed comparative quiet, and was not seriously molested.

While, however, these unpleasant demonstrations on the outside were thus quieted, others on the inside were yet to be quelled. In 1805 Asbury Church had upon her records about one hundred colored members. The classes were held on the floor of the church, sometimes two or three classes being held at the same time in the same room. Among others who were thus privileged were the one hundred colored members. That they did not believe in an undemonstrative Christianity may be gathered from an action of the trustees on June 19, 1805, when a resolution was passed which in few words brings before us the noisy scenes enacted here in these primitive times. It reads as follows:

“WHEREAS, In consequence of meeting the classes of the black people on the lower seats of this church, a number of the benches have been broken, and the house so defiled by dirt, &c., as to render it unfit to meet in, and if any longer tolerated, more injury may be sustained; wherefore it was

“Resolved, That no black classes shall hereafter meet on the lower floor of Asbury Church, and if they refuse to meet in the gallery, the sexton inform them that the door will not be opened for their reception, and furthermore, the leaders of the same are requested to respect this resolution and govern themselves accordingly.”

On Sunday, April 28, 1800, Dr. Thomas Coke convened the male members of Asbury Church to draft an address to the General Conference, soon to be held at Baltimore, to adopt some plan to secure pecuniary aid for the married preachers, to prevent in future so many leaving the traveling connection. On Monday evening John Thelwell, Samuel Wood and Edward Worrell, who had been appointed a committee to draft the address, reported the following, which was read to the society by Dr. Coke and signed by all the male members:

“WILMINGTON, April 29, 1800.

“To the members and preachers in General Conference assembled at Baltimore:

“As a small part of those composing the family of which you are the stewards, feeling in common with you and our lay brethren in general, an earnest desire for the prosperity of Zion, and seeing her often linger for want of help, it is with the deepest concern that we have seen for a considerable time so many of our aged, and some of the most useful married laborers, are no longer working in their Lord’s vineyard for want of pecuniary aid.

“The evil we sincerely lament, and view it as one in magnitude next the greatest that could come upon us. But while we deplore the evil it is not in our province to devise the remedy, or the mode of pre-

venting it, but leave it to the wisdom of those who have the care over us, and hope they will dictate a system of finance calculated to prevent in future as much as possible the thing complained of, by acting in aid of former establishments to give present relief to those who otherwise may be under necessity to recede from their labors.

“From these considerations, (though we are as but the drop to the ocean both in number and circumstances), we feel willing to contribute our mite in promoting any plan which may in the wisdom of conference be adopted. This address Dr. Coke took with him to the General Conference of 1800.”

Asbury has always been decidedly in favor of free seats, and in the early days of her history, while nearly all other churches made a stranger feel that he received a seat only as a personal favor, Asbury opened wide her doors to all, and gave to all men an equal right to a place in the church during Divine worship. There is no prospect to-day that this policy will be changed. What the sentiment of the early church authorities was, may be inferred from the action of the trustees, on June 21, 1809. It reads thus:

“WHEREAS, It is contrary to the order and rules of our church to erect pews, or place other obstructions to entering the seats in the said church; and

“WHEREAS, An obstruction has been placed by some unknown person at the entrance of a seat in the gallery; therefore,

“Resolved, That the sexton be hereby authorized and required to remove as soon as convenient the said obstruction, and suffer no more such obstructions to be placed to the entrance of seats in the said church during his continuance to be sexton.”

It is said that this proceeding of the trustees was occasioned by a number of singers determining they would sit together and lead the singing. They erected doors to one of the seats to exclude all others. This wise action of our fathers in making the seating free to all, has doubtless, been one cause why such vast crowds attended Asbury to-day and for years past, while many other churches are rarely filled.

In the year 1802 the church was incorporated, and on the 25th of May of that year, the first corporate trustees were elected. They were Henry Colesbury, Isaac Hews, Samuel Wood, Henry Metz, George Jones, Maurice Williams and Caleb Kendall.

At the very first meeting that they held, on June 17th, 1802, steps were taken to build a dwelling-house for the preachers. It was built during that year on the southwest corner of the church lot, very near

the southwest corner of the church. This building was a small, two-story, frame structure, very well remembered by many of our older members of the present day. In its erection a debt was contracted that the small society could not pay, and, on June 21, 1809, it was surrendered to the mortgagee, Edward Worrell, in satisfaction of his claim, on condition that it should be removed at once. It was removed to the other side of the church, on the southeast corner of Walnut and Third streets. In 1823 the trustees bought it and the lot on which it stood, as we have already seen, and until 1853 the building was used as a sexton's house. In that year Chas. Moore was authorized to sell it for \$60. This he did, and it was removed to Seventh and Church streets where it still may be seen. In 1826 another effort was made to build a parsonage, but it was not successful. A house for the preacher was rented in different parts of the city for many years. At one time the parsonage was on High street, (Sixth) between King and French, at another time on the corner of Walnut and High. In 1843 the church owned two houses, one on Market street occupied by the preacher, the other on Shipley which had been the parsonage. On March 10, 1843, the house on Shipley was exchanged for a three-story brick building on King street, above Seventh. This was sold to Allen Vane in 1846 when the present parsonage was erected. The stewards paid to the trustees \$150 annual rent for this house for several years.

Though considerable repairs were made in 1818, in consequence of damages from a great storm, the second improvement on the church, in which the walls were changed for the enlargement of the building, was in 1828, when Thomas Young, Richard Williams, John Guyer, James Simpson, and Edward Worrell, constituted the building committee. It is probable that a great revival blessed the church in the first pastorate of J. Rustling, 1819-21. In his first year he reported 215 white members, and in his second 305. A subscription paper was put in circulation to build a school-house, but it failed. Enough money, however, had been collected to repair and paint the church. In 1828, during the pastorate of Solomon Higgins, in consequence of another great revival, which increased the white membership to 344, the work of enlargement could be no longer delayed. On March 11, 1828, therefore, it was determined to extend the north wall 30 feet toward Third street. At a subsequent meeting this was reconsidered, and it was decided to enlarge 15 feet toward Third street and 15 feet eastward. This was accordingly done and the church, which was originally 35 feet square, was, in 1828, 50 feet by 70 feet with galleries on the south, west and north sides, but was still a one-story building.

In the early history of the society there was great opposition to

the holding of a Sabbath-school in the church. Some of the officials said they did not so much mind the girls coming in, but the boys were rude and unruly, and cut the benches with their knives. Still the Sabbath-school was popular and continued to grow. In 1822 it was decided to provide suitable quarters for the children and a school building, about 18 feet by 25 feet, was erected next the church at the southwest corner of the lot. In this building several who are still among us attended Sabbath-school. A day-school was conducted here, the building being rented from the trustees for this purpose, and a Young Men's Beneficial Club debated great and weighty matters within its walls. It stood here till 1846, when better arrangements were made for the comfort of the Sabbath-school.

By members of Asbury, Sabbath-schools have been organized in various parts of the city. Some of these were apparently not successful; others have developed into strong churches. The infant department of the school purchased a lot on Shipley street on which they erected a two-story brick building in which to conduct a school. At first they met with great success but reverses came, and because of a mortgage of \$900 they were compelled to surrender their property to the trustees of the church, on condition that the trustees would assume the debt. The property accordingly was taken by the trustees in 1832, and the building was so altered as to make it a comfortable parsonage.

Other schools were commenced by Asbury Church which have developed into independent societies. Seventh street school became Scott Church, rivaling in earnestness and fidelity her mother. A school in Brandywine village grew until to-day we have the flourishing Brandywine Church. Mt. Salem school is now but one of the many enterprises of Mt. Salem Church. Madeley began in Sabbath-school work by Asbury toilers, who surrendered when Grace was willing to provide according to their usual liberality for the infant society. Wesley, Silverbrook, and Cookman of a later day, date their incipency from the labors of Sunday-school workers from the old Asbury hive.

In all institutions supported by the voluntary contributions of the members, there are always a number who shirk all financial responsibility, and are perfectly satisfied to let some one else pay what they themselves know to be their due. In most churches to-day, one-half to two-thirds of the members bear these burdens, and the remainder thank God for a free gospel. It was so at Asbury in 1826, but our fathers decided that every one must pay, or they should not enjoy the privileges of the society. One of the rules of the church was that all persons not members of Asbury must pay for graves in the churchyard,

but to members graves for their own family were free. In 1826 it was enacted by the trustees that no members who could not show by the books that his quarterage accounts were square for the preceding three months, should have the privilege of interring his dead free; but, since he did not support the church, he must pay for his grave like one who was not a member. According to this resolution, a member was refused by the grave-yard committee permission to bury one of his family. On August 14, 1830, he appealed to the board of trustees, but they unanimously sustained the committee. As late as 1841 these resolutions were read and explained from the pulpit by Robert Gerry, and their enforcement pledged. Many a church financier has bothered his brain to concoct a plan by which church delinquents might be compelled honorably to take their share of church burdens, but it was for an earlier age to use such determined efforts.

For us who stand in the full blaze of the modern electric light, it is hard to conceive the day when this church was lighted by nothing better than the flickering and dim candle light. Yet 65 years ago all the light that illuminated this building when the sunlight had disappeared was the tallow candle. They hung from the walls in little brackets high enough to be out of the reach of the heads of the people. About every fifteen minutes the sexton had to pass all around the church and snuff them. This operation, especially when the sexton was a short man, was a delicate piece of work, and afforded great amusement at times to the young and ungodly part of the congregations, while even the saints could not forbear to smile, when the little sexton, losing his uncertain equilibrium, snuffed the candle out. On December 2, 1824, after mature deliberation, Lewis Ashton, Miller Dunott, Richard Williams and Henry J. Pepper were appointed a committee to take into consideration the comparative merits and expense of candles and oil. At the succeeding meeting of the trustees, their report having been heard and maturely considered, and as it demonstrated the superiority and cheapness of oil, it was decided to procure lamps, and a barrel of the best sperm oil was purchased. It took five years to discuss the next change, from oil to gas, and it was not till 1851, when John A. Roche was pastor, that gas was introduced into the church.

The third improvement made upon the church by which the building was enlarged, was in 1838, when, after a revival under Wm. A. Wiggins, the membership had increased to 420 white and 110 colored. Miller Dunott, John Flinn and Richard Williams were appointed the building committee, and John M. Turner did the work. The old brick wall that stood in front of the church was then removed and the church

was extended ten feet westward to the building line. The old west wall of the church was not torn down, but the ten-foot space between the old wall and the new was used for a vestibule. In this vestibule the stairway ascended, and over it, in the back part of the gallery were two class rooms, the first the church possessed, in which some of these old men and women about me to-day met for years. The church was then 80 feet by 50, with a gallery on three sides, but still one-story.

Many of our fathers delighted in late meetings, and often the songs and shouts of the people were heard till midnight and beyond. There were some, however, who thought this was not letting all things be done in decency and order; so on January 16, 1829, the trustees, after discussing the many evils arising from this disturbing practice, especially, as they state, the "unnecessary waste of fuel and the means of lighting the house," directed the sexton, "to extinguish the lamps at 10 o'clock, unless there are mourners in the house engaged in prayer, and some prospect of good being done."

Previous to 1830 it would have been considered the grossest impropriety for men and women to enter by the same door into the church. One side of the church and one door were exclusively for men, the other for women, while, as we have already noted, down the center of the church was a high partition, running the whole length of the church where seats extended, and effectually barring off the one sex from the other. By 1832 this gave rise to many complaints. If a husband desired to escort his wife home, he must pass out his door, and out his gate in the brick fence, and around to the other gate and door in search of her, or else he must stand out on the pavement to meet her upon her exit, not a pleasant duty if the weather were inclement. It is quaintly said in the trustees' record that this man's difficulties were made all the greater by the fact that one of the doors was usually surrounded by a crowd. Which door this was I leave to the judgment of our sisters, with the single suggestion that the mothers were just as fond of a little social chat at the close of the service as the daughters are to-day. On August 20, 1832, therefore, it was decided by the trustees, in order to silence these complaints and promote the comfort of the worshipers, that the men and women should enter by the same doors, the men to take seats on the left hand side of the aisles, and the women on the right. The idea of promiscuous sitting even then would have aroused the indignation of the church. This custom was not introduced until 1845, when Chas. Moore moved to this effect in the trustees' meeting.

In 1835 and 1836, when J. Rustling was serving his second

term at Asbury, he had a long spell of sickness, and was unable to perform the work of the charge. To assist him, junior preachers were employed, whose names do not appear on the usual list of Asbury preachers. During Mr. Rustling's first year Levi Storcks was his assistant, and during his second William Urie occupied the position. Matthew Sorin followed Mr. Rustling, and, of course, needed no helper.

It is sometimes supposed that the custom of the church in inviting a special preacher to be their pastor, is of very late origin, and that our fathers would have been horrified at such a procedure. This is a mistake. The fathers were no less anxious to secure the man of their choice than the sons are to-day. After a general meeting of the society on December 30, 1835, to consider what steps should be taken to secure a desirable preacher, it was resolved that the trustees use all proper means to secure from the Philadelphia Conference, the appointment of the Rev. Chas. Pitman as the pastor of Asbury for the next year, and Thomas Young, Miller Dunott, and Henry Hicks were appointed a committee to carry out the wishes of the church. Like many other committees, this one failed in securing their choice. Surely, however, they had no cause of complaint when the bishop read the name of Matthew Sorin as their preacher.

The fourth improvement, and, perhaps, the most radical of all, was made in 1845, when Anthony Atwood was pastor. No change was made in the linear dimensions of the building, but the church at this time was transformed into a two-story structure. The floor was lowered two feet, and the walls were raised seven feet six inches, and, of course, a new roof was put on. In the basement, which was nine feet high in the clear, four class-rooms, two on each side of an eight-foot entry, were laid off at the Walnut street entrance, back of the vestibule. The rest of the basement was used for a lecture-room, fifty feet by thirty-eight, with the desk changed from the east to the south end, and a door on the Third street side. The auditorium had a gallery eleven feet six inches wide on the north and south sides, and over the vestibule on the west; the seats were placed in two blocks with a four-foot aisle in the center, and a three-foot aisle on each side of the church; doors opening into the vestibule were placed at the end of each aisle, and two small windows were put in over the pulpit. The building committee consisted of Anthony Atwood, pastor, Richard Williams, Chas. Moore, and George Magee. When this work was completed, for the first time, in many years, the congregation had accommodations for the varied work of the church. From this time the Sabbath-school occupied the lecture-room, and the school house

was soon after removed. The next year, 1846, part of the roof of the church was blown off, but the repairs needed were soon made. The membership a year before this improvement was made was eight hundred and eighty-four, the largest the church has ever had.

In 1839, one hundred years after Methodism was organized in England, and just fifty years after the dedication of Asbury, pursuant to a resolution passed by the Philadelphia Conference at its preceding session, interesting centenary services were held in this church. On September 2, 1839, the centenary committee met in its first session. The following members were present: Rev. Joseph Lybrand, preacher in charge, Rev. David Daily, Presiding Elder of the Chesapeake district which included this station, Richard Williams, Chas. Moore, Miller Dunott, Asa Poinsett, George Magee, John Flinn, and Thomas Young. Upon motion of Rev. David Daily, all the other official members were added to the committee. The following persons were thus added: John Hagany, local elder; Samuel Wood, local deacon; Solomon Prettyman, Samuel H. Higgins, and Wm. Kirkman, local preachers; James Thomas and Robert Thompson, exhorters; and James Lane, John M. Turner, John Guyer, Jarrett Magaw, John Quinby, Isaac M. Connell, Jacob M. Garrettson, and Barney Harris, class leaders. The committee appointed September 16th as the day for holding the general centenary services. When the day arrived, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon Joseph Lybrand took the chair, and explained the purposes of the meeting, after which the Revs. Jas. H. McFarland and John Kennaday delivered addresses. The secretaries of the meetings, Solomon Prettyman and Dr. S. H. Higgins, have left well-written and interesting minutes of the meeting. Of Mr. McFarland's address, the secretaries say: "He was introduced to the audience and proceeded to address the assembly in a very pertinent and forcible manner for the space of thirty minutes. Mr. Kennaday followed with a short address which he intended should be very brief, in view of the fact that he had been appointed to address the meeting in the evening. He enlarged somewhat upon the views of the first speaker, and exhibited some interesting facts and some amusing occurrences illustrative of several interesting positions previously stated, demonstrating the benefits of the Methodist itinerancy in stirring up and animating the zeal of other Christian communities." In the evening Joseph Lybrand was again in the chair.

After prayer by the Rev. Edward Kennard, Mr. Kennaday delivered a very interesting address, exhibiting the design of the centenary celebration in relation both to the temporal and spiritual prosperity of the church. "The matter of the address," says the secretary, "was well chosen, and the speaker was happy in the manner of its delivery.

He brought forward some interesting examples as well as arguments to show that piety and benevolence go hand in hand, anticipated and answered many objections made by those who would excuse themselves when benevolent enterprises should call to action, and argued that the objects for which the centenary fund is designed are ever worthy and noble." A collection was then taken for the fund, when 156 persons gave \$581.56. On Sunday, October 25, the religious observances of the centenary took place. A large congregation met at 6 o'clock in the morning and held a general prayer meeting, which was characterized by the most devotional feelings and sentiments. At 10 o'clock the pastor, Rev. Joseph Lybrand, delivered a discourse based on I Samuel, vii: 12.—"Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." The sermon was admirably calculated to excite feelings of pious gratitude to God for his wonderful preservation of that form of Christianity, called Methodism, during the first century of her progress, and of the most lively hopes of the part she has yet to act in the conversion of the world to God.

It was in the centenary year, 1839, that the trustees first selected a secretary for the relief of the chairman of the board. Chas. Moore, now in his 83rd year, who still moves among us to prove the sustaining power of God in old age, was chosen for this position.

Considerable agitation was caused in Asbury Church by the action of the General Conference in 1844, and the formation of an independent church by our southern brethren. Discussion ran high, and some advocated joining the southern church, or at least suggested the propriety of such a course. But, as on many other occasions, the wisdom of the officials asserted itself, and the following action was entered upon the Quarterly Conference records for November 4, 1844: "Some conversation took place in reference to the division of the church, and the proceedings of the General Conference in the case of Bishop Andrew. But it seemed to be the general opinion that, owing to our geographical position and the quiet that prevails throughout this congregation, it is prudent for us to take no action in the case."

The fifth general repair of the church was in 1872, when the Rev. Enoch Stubbs was pastor, Charles Wood, Jacob Webb, Charles Heald, J. J. McMullin and R. Heisler were the building committee. No change was made in the walls of the building except in a small recess to enlarge the pulpit at the east end, but improvements were put upon the interior costing \$12,000. The church was dedicated on January 19, 1873, when the dedicatory sermon was preached by the Rev. C. N. Simms, D. D. LL. D. of Syracuse, N. Y.

There are indications in all the records that the cause of temperance has always occupied a warm place in the affections of this church. Often were the most noted temperance lecturers invited to speak from the pulpit at a time when temperance work was not popular. John B. Gough and other distinguished leaders have thrilled large audiences within these walls as they depicted the evils of the drink traffic, and laid upon the church its duty. As early as 1853 a resolution was introduced into the Quarterly Conference that antedated more than twenty-five years similar action by the General Conference. After referring to the growing evils from the use of intoxicants, it was resolved by the Quarterly Conference "to advise our people to abstain from signing petitions for license to sell ardent spirits, and that the preacher, Robert Gerry, be requested to read this action from the pulpit." It was not till 1880 that the General Conference included under "Imprudent Conduct" the signing of a license to sell intoxicating beverages. Thus was our church far ahead of the church generally, and this interest in temperance work continues to the present day.

In 1861 the division of our conference territory was agitated. The Philadelphia Conference referred the matter of division to the several Quarterly Conferences of the Peninsula. On October 5, 1861, the officials of this church, in Quarterly Conference assembled, decided that, as the country was so greatly excited by the civil war then in progress, it would not be wise to divide at that time. The wisdom of this action is apparent now, as a severing of our connection at that time from Philadelphia and the northern work would have greatly injured our standing on the Peninsula, and built up the other Methodist churches.

In 1866 Asbury had the misfortune to lose by death its much beloved pastor, the Rev. George Quigley. He was a faithful man, a boanerges in the pulpit, constantly at work in his pastorate, full of the Holy Ghost. He was advised some weeks before he died to take a rest, but he replied that there were sick in his membership who needed pastoral care. He would not leave them. He was soon after stricken down with typhoid fever and died on June 25, 1866, at the Asbury parsonage, a victim of over work. He was the only minister that died while pastor of this church. His body lies in the Wilmington and Brandywine Cemetery, awaiting the resurrection of the just. I. Mast filled out the unexpired term.

Asbury has always been conservative, slow to introduce innovations upon established usages, devoted to the records of the past. Retaining many of the customs of earlier days, she looks upon it as no

reflection upon her standing that she is regarded as nearer primitive Methodism in her modes of worship than any other church in the Conference. It may easily be imagined what bitter opposition was aroused when, during the civil war, the question of the introduction of an organ into the church was agitated. On June 3, 1864, the trustees received a communication from the choir, asking permission to introduce an instrument of music into the church. They were about to settle the question, but, proving too weighty for them, it was referred to a joint meeting of the trustees and stewards. This meeting was held and the matter was debated with interest, but it was too large for even this meeting. Upon motion of Alexander Kelly, it was decided to appoint a committee to wait upon all the members of the Quarterly Conference and secure their vote, yea or nay, for the government of the trustees in their action. When this committee had completed its work it was found that eight had voted yea, fourteen had voted nay, and the others had shown the white feather and would not vote at all. The trustees accordingly deemed it inexpedient to grant the request. On November 3, 1865, it was again brought forward upon motion of Bro. Kelly, but negatived. During the strife the choir refused to sing, and for some time the church was without its assistance. On May 4, 1866, however, the trustees appointed a committee to raise the money for an instrument of music, and in the fall of that year, the organ was introduced into the church. Mr. C. Wells, at a salary of \$100, was the first organist, and Mr. Ashley Simpson the leader of the choir.

During the latter part of the term of Enoch Stubbs, and during the pastorate of John A. B. Wilson, and the last pastorate of Chas. Hill, the Sunday-school suffered greatly for want of proper accommodations. The main school was unpleasantly crowded, and the infant department had no proper place to hold its sessions, being compelled to use the gallery of the church for this purpose. After many discussions, in the board of trustees and among the members, relating to the building of a large chapel in the northeast corner of the church lot, the problem was finally solved during the pastorate of W. L. S. Murray. At this time the sixth and last improvement was made upon the church, David S. Truitt, John Gray, Benjamin J. Downing, Charles F. Welch, and George Rickards, being the building committee. The outward appearance of the building was radically changed, and no one who looks upon the church to-day, can imagine the little one-story church, thirty-five feet square, from which this structure arose. In this improvement the lecture-room was extended twenty feet to the building line on Third street, the church being thus converted into an L-shaped building. The floor of the lecture-room, in order to give greater height

to the room, was lowered two feet. This improvement added fifteen feet to the lecture room, and provided space for an ample library, and a large vestibule on the ground floor. In the second story, on a level with the floor of the auditorium, it provided a room 50 x 20 feet for the infant department, and in a third story, on a level with the gallery, is another room of the same dimensions now used as a church parlor.

On November 8, 1885, when this much needed improvement had been completed, the church was re-opened with appropriate services, including a collection. The Rev. C. N. Simms, D. D., LL. D., Chancellor of the Syracuse University, preached in the morning, Bishop H. W. Warren in the afternoon, and the Rev. J. Richard Boyle, D. D., of Grace Church, Wilmington, in the evening. The day was very inclement, yet nearly \$5,000 of the \$10,000 needed were raised in cash and subscriptions. During the pastorate of the Rev. J. E. Bryan, whose indefatigable efforts to complete the payment of this debt will long be remembered, the debt was nearly cancelled, the last dollar being paid during the present pastorate, October 6, 1889.

In 1875, at a time when Asbury was on a high tide of prosperity, the Rev. Geo. R. Kramer was appointed pastor. This appointment seemed at first to promise great beneficial results, but soon the pastor began to promulgate doctrines antagonistic to the Methodist faith. The brother, without doubt, had a perfect right to his opinions, but he had no right to use a Methodist pulpit, as a Methodist preacher, to attack Methodist doctrines. As soon as a preacher of any church feels impelled by his conscience to preach doctrines out of harmony with his vows there is but one honorable step left for him to take—resign his pulpit at once. The preaching of Mr. Kramer, who was a man of great eloquence, greatly disturbed Asbury Church, and, when in 1877 he retired from our communion, many useful and honest but mistaken members went with him. A church was established by them, entitled "The Household of Faith," which had but a brief existence. Their pastor received a call to a better position in Brooklyn, and accepted it. The members, left shepherdless, struggled against debt and disappointment for a while, and finally succumbed. A few still believe the doctrines of "The Household of Faith," some have drifted clear away from all Christian moorings, a number have returned to Asbury, and Mr. Kramer himself is now a preacher in the Baptist church. It was thought at first that great and lasting damage had been done to Asbury by this schism, but the old church quickly recovered, and advanced in her career of prosperity more rapidly than ever.

Thus after a century and a fifth of history we stand to-day within these sacred walls to thank God for his never-failing care over this people. As we look about us how different are the surroundings from a century ago! Then we were persecuted, now we are in honor; then we were reviled for preaching salvation for all men, now everybody preaches it; then we were a little, obscure company, now a mighty host. Of the old church only a small part remains. On the south side about 35 ft. from the east end, 10 ft. from the west, and $7\frac{1}{2}$ from the eaves, and on the west side in the partition that divides the vestibule from the rest of the church, part of the original wall still remains. The rest, like our fathers who founded the church, is gone. The alterations in the building are but an emblem of other and equally important changes constantly being made in the membership. There have been many vicissitudes, a few discouragements, some schisms, yet the church to-day has upon her record 840 full members and 52 probationers. St. Paul's, Union, Scott, Brandywine, Mt. Salem, Silverbrook and Cookman, as will be seen from the papers read here from these churches, have gone directly from this family circle, and many more sons and daughters of old Asbury have departed with the mother's blessing upon them to work for Christ in church-homes of their own choosing. To change the figure, the old hive is still full. Though swarm after swarm has gone forth in search of a hive of its own there have always been hundreds more of busy workers to take its place, and to-day the old hive is in good condition to swarm again.

We begin our second century with a bright outlook. Our services are soul-thrilling; often the saints of God shout aloud the praises of the King. Our classes have the old time fire still resting upon them; our lecture-room, on Friday evening, is usually well-filled with earnest souls, verifying the promise of Christ to meet with them, as they renew the vows of fidelity to Him; the Sunday morning prayer meeting is of the primitive type, no man there is afraid to tell what the Lord has done for his soul; old-fashioned revivals are frequent, in which nothing better than a Methodist altar for a sinner to seek Christ is wanted, and cries of penitence mingled with the shouts of rejoicing of the converted, and the triumphant songs of the saints, are often heard; at the ordinary Sunday services often hundreds, who would gladly worship with us, are turned away, and we are well assured that God is in our midst.

The work of the church is varied. A Sunday-school doing work that will be felt in eternity; a Ladies' Aid Society, caring for the comfort of the parsonage inmates and the beautifying of the church; a Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and a Murray Band of young

ladies, sending the gospel to the benighted women of the Orient; a Woman's Home Missionary Society and Home Circle attending to the work at home; a King's Daughter's Society, ever ready to assist in any good work; a Young People's Christian Endeavor Society, building up young Christians, and saving the unregenerate youth about us; twenty classes meeting weekly for testimony and prayer; these represent some of the energies of the church; while trustees, leaders, stewards, faithful men of God, watch and forward every interest of our Zion.

From our church have gone forth the following men into the traveling connection of the Methodist ministry: John B. Hagany, Samuel H. Higgins, Edward Kennard, Thos. L. Poulson, Jas. McLaughlin, A. T. Scott, Jacob Dickerson, Wesley Johnson, T. B. Killiam, T. J. Cochran, W. W. Sharpe and Asbury Burke.

The following Annual Conferences have been held at Asbury:

CONFERENCE.	DATE.	BISHOP.	SECRETARY.
Philadelphia,	Ap. 11-19, 1832,	{ McKendree } { and } { Hedding, }	G. G. Cookman.
"	Ap. 4-12, 1838,	Hedding,	W. A. Wiggins.
"	Ap. 6-14, 1842,	Waugh,	"
"	Nov. 25, Ap. 3, 1857,	Waugh,	P. Combs.
"	Mar. 9-16, 1864,	Ames,	R. H. Pattison.
*Wilmington,	Mar. 17-23, 1869,	Simpson,	Samuel L. Gracy.
"	Mar. 5-11, 1884,	Harris,	John D. Rigg.

In the 100 years of our history 62 men have officiated as pastors. Of these one died while pastor, George Quigley, in 1866; six served two pastoral terms, viz: John M. McClaskey, Ezekiel Cooper, Joseph Rustling, John Kenneday, Joseph Lybrand and Robert Gerry; to Chas. Hill alone belongs the honor of having occupied this pastorate three times. Of the 62 pastors, one, Geo. R. Kramer, is now a minister of the Baptist church, and 51 have gone to their eternal reward. Of the ten who are still in the ranks of the Methodist ministry, Joseph Mason and Gassoway Oram are on the retired list of the Philadelphia Conference, John A. Roche is an active member of the New York East Conference, W. C. Robinson and Enoch Stubbs are serving churches in Philadelphia, John A. B. Wilson and W. L. S. Murray are Presiding Elders in the Wilmington Conference, Chas. Hill and J. E. Bryan are pastors in the same Conference, and the writer is the present pastor of Asbury.

*This was the first session of the Wilmington Conference.

The following is a list of the pastors that have served Asbury in the last hundred years :

TIME.	PREACHERS.	WHITE.	COLORED.	PRESIDING ELDERS.
1789	William Jessup,	43	19	Lemuel Green.
1790	John McClaskey,	40	20	Richard Whatcoat.
1791	Thomas Ware,	93	48	Lemuel Green.
1792	Silvester Hutchinson,	83	41	John McClaskey.
1793	Robert Cloud, 6 mos.,	82	55	" "
1793	Evan Rogers, 6 mos., On Chester Circuit.	90	55	Freeborn Garretson.
1794	Wm. Farley, James Smith,			Valentine Cook. " "
1795	Fredus Aldridge,			John Merrick.
1796	John Vanneman,	40	30	Thomas Ware.
1797	Ezekiel Cooper, Wilmington & Newport.	61	37	" "
1798	Ezekiel Cooper, Wilmington.	69	48	" "
1799	Daniel Fidler,	73	46	" "
1800	Caleb Kendall,	87	47	Joseph Everett.
1801	" "	157	85	" "
1802	James Lattomus,	125	117	Thomas Ware.
1803	Thomas Jones, On the Circuit.	113	98	Christopher Spry.
1804	Wm. Hunter, Jos. Osburn, J. Stephens,			Wm. Colbert. " " " "
1805	Wm. Hunter, D. James. James Moore, Wilmington a station again.			Solomon Sharp. " " " "
1806	Joshua Wells,			" "
1807	John McClaskey,	112	96	" "
1808	William Bishop,	99	104	Wm. Chandler.
1809	Ezekiel Cooper,	126	145	Wm. Hunter.
1810	Wm. M'Lenahan,	132	134	" "
1811	James Sanders,	137	137	" "
1812	James Bateman,	142	178	" "
1813	George Sheets, Chester and Wilmington.	138	46	Henry Boehm.
1814	Geo. Sheets and Thomas Miller to change once a month,	123	71	Henry Boehm.
1815	John Emory,	127	72	Robert R. Roberts.

TIME.	PREACHERS.	WHITE.	COLORED.	PRESIDING ELDERS.
1817	John Goforth,	190	67	" "
1818	Samuel J. Cox,	212	67	" "
1819	Joseph Rustling,	215	68	" "
1820	" " Wilmington and New Castle.	305	74	James Bateman.
1821	Lawrence Laurenson, Wil., N. Castle and Newport.	325	70	" "
1822	John Potts, Wilmington a station again.	339	77	" "
1823	John Potts,	203	88	" "
1824	Solomon Sharpe,	319	78	Joseph Lybrand.
1825	Henry White,	279	42	" "
1826	L. M'Combs,	288	55	" "
1827	Solomon Higgins,	290	104	" "
1828	" "	344	101	Lawrence Laurenson.
1829	David Dailey,	347	90	L. M'Combs.
1830	John Kenneday,	334	98	" "
1831	" "	360	98	" "
1832	Joseph Lybrand,	385	100	" "
1833	" "	437	131	Matthew Sorin.
1834	J. Rustling; Levi Storcks,	439	134	" "
1816	Wm. Williams,	130	57	Daniel Hitt.
1835	Jos. Rustling, W. Urie,	382	130	Matthew Sorin.
1836	Matthew Sorin,	363	173	David Dailey.
1837	William A. Wiggins,	348	90	" "
1838	" "	420	110	" "
1839	Joseph Lybrand,	558	119	" "
1840	" "	505	136	Henry White.
1841	Robert Gerry,	580	136	" "
1842	" "	700	140	" "
1843	John Kenneday,	750	150	" "
1844	" "	884	163	Daniel Lambdin.
1845	Anthony Atwood,	840	170	" "
1846	" "	594	192	" "
1847	Thomas J. Thompson,	693	256	" "
1848	" "	694	260	James Smith.

Previous to 1849, no report of probationers was made in the general minutes.

TIME.	PREACHERS.	WHITE.		COLORED.		PRESIDING ELDER.
		MEM.	PROB.	MEM.	PROB.	
1849	Wm. Cooper,	622	121	277	29	James Smith.
1850	"	550	70	235	32	"

After this colored people are not reported in Asbury minutes. They are independent.

1851	John A. Roche,	529	185			James Smith.
1852	"	621	100			Anthony Atwood.

TIME.	PREACHERS.	WHITE.	COLORED.	PRESIDING ELDER.
1853	Robert Gerry,	637	90	Anthony Atwood.
1854	"	640	90	"
1855	Joseph Mason,	584	70	T. J. Thompson.
1856	"	562	64	"
1857	Gassaway Oram,	570	42	Wm. Urie.
1858	"	550	62	"
1859	Wesley Kenney,	568	20	"
1860	"	580	120	"
1861	Charles Hill,	661	46	Joseph Mason.
1862	"	663	33	"
1863	W. C. Robinson,	592	25	"
1864	"	589	160	"
1865	George Quigley,	664	75	James Cunningham.
1866	" died, and I. Mast filled out the year.	670	102	"
1867	J. D. Curtis,	639	144	"
1868	"	640	30	"
1869	Charles Hill,	572	40	J. D. Curtis.
1870	"	569	87	"
1871	"	628	119	"
1872	Enoch Stubbs,	631	63	"
1873	"	612	62	T. J. Thompson.
1874	"	620	170	T. J. Thompson, died Nov. 29, 1874, John B. Quigg.
1875	Geo. R. Kramer,	675	105	John B. Quigg.
1876	"	690	238	"
1877	Geo. R. Kramer, tell, T. B. Killiam, remainder of year,	764	63	"
1878	J. A. B. Wilson,	618	14	"
1879	"	575	65	L. C. Matlack.

TIME.	PREACHER.	WHITE.	COLORED.	PRESIDING ELDERS.
1880	Charles Hill,	601	19	"
1881	"	594	27	"
1882	"	587	49	"
1883	W. L. S. Murray,	593	52	Charles Hill.
1884	"	650	191	"
1885	"	750	50	"
1886	Jas. E. Bryan,	720	80	"
1887	"	813	45	W. L. S. Murray.
1888	"	700	90	"
1889	John D. C. Hanna,	720	126	"

At the present time the members of the Quarterly Conference, upon whom rest the responsibilities of the church, are as follows:

Charles Moore, Dr. J. H. Simms and John Simmons, local preachers; John Wise, Matthew Megarvey, Andrew J. Dalbow, Robert Humphreys, Chas. A. Foster and A. Sergeant, exhorters; Chas. M. Leitch, recording steward, Wm. T. Groves, district steward, Chas. Moore, J. C. Johnson, John Wise, Chas. Wood, John T. Mortimer, Wm. F. Maclin, H. A. Roop, H. H. Ferguson, Chas. Heald, Wm. F. Johnson, and Geo. S. Hagany, stewards; David R. Truitt, president of the board of trustees; David Whitsell, secretary; John Gray, Benj. J. Downing, Augustus Dennis, Chas. F. Welch, Jas. H. Floyd, Wm. B. Wharton, and T. A. D. Hutton, trustees; Chas. Moore, John Banthrum, Wm. B. Genn, Jas. E. McKay, Louis Maxwell, A. Sergeant, John Wise, Mrs. Chas. Moore, Wm. Pennell, Jacob Ellwanger, Chas. F. Bordner, Chas. A. Foster, Wm. T. Hought, Andrew J. Dalbow, T. B. Ridgway, B. F. Leonard, Noah Cunningham, Robert G. Humphreys, Geo. Heisler, and the pastor, leaders. Jas. E. McKay is superintendent of the afternoon school, and the assistant, Wm. J. Johnson, has charge in the morning. Miss Sallie Shaw and Miss Ella Marvel are also assistants in the main school. The infant department is in charge of Mrs. M. A. Taggart, assisted by Mrs. Chas. Moore and Miss Georgia Carver.

Thus most imperfectly have we traced the century's history of our beloved church. The forty-three white members have become four thousand four hundred and sixty-one members and probationers, the nineteen colored members are now seven hundred and forty, and both white and colored people have given off many more to assist in building other folds. We are standing together and looking back during this centennial week. Yet we are not so much concerned with the past as with the future. How are we building for the generations to come?

God of our fathers make us faithful to our goodly heritage. Make the next century more glorious in heroic endeavor and magnificent results even than the one now closing. Make the children of to-day faithful, determined, persistent, self-sacrificing, victorious. And when the generations to come review our work, may they pronounce upon us the encomium, "They did what they could."

POSTCARD HISTORY SERIES

Wilmington

IN VINTAGE POSTCARDS



F174
W7
M36
2000

Marjorie G. McNinch



The Methodist denomination counted the greatest number in their ranks as well as having the most varied socioeconomic groups represented. The faith attracted great numbers of migrants from southern Delaware during the early 19th century. By the 1840s prominent citizens and businessmen broke from Asbury M.E. Church, and formed their own congregation by building St. Paul's Church at Seventh and Market Streets in 1845. Methodists addressed issues of social disorder in the community and were the most active at the time in doing so. In 1911 a new church at Tenth and Jackson was built to hold the growing congregation. This beautiful church did not survive the entrance of I-95 through the city in 1968 and rebuilt north of the city.



The Asbury Methodist Church was built in 1789 on the southeast corner of Third and Walnut Streets, 17 years after Francis Asbury began preaching in Wilmington. This church practiced some degree of racial integration, but tensions arose and Peter Spencer and his followers broke away to form the African Union Methodist Church in 1812. In 1885 the building was enlarged, and in 1937, five memorial windows were dedicated.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED AUG 2 1976
DATE ENTERED NOV 7 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES - COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC * * Old Asbury Methodist Church
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Walnut & Third Streets
CITY, TOWN Wilmington
STATE Delaware VICINITY OF COUNTY New Castle CODE 002
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 1

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Methodist Mission and Church Extension Society, Inc.
STREET & NUMBER 407 W. Ninth Street
CITY, TOWN Wilmington STATE Delaware

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. New Castle Court House
STREET & NUMBER Public Building, Rodney Square
CITY, TOWN Wilmington STATE Delaware

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Survey of Delaware Historic Sites & Buildings, N-174
DATE June-August, 1975
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Hall of Records
CITY, TOWN Dover STATE Delaware

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Old Asbury Methodist Church is a large ashlar-stuccoed building of the Italianate-eclectic style. It has gables facing both west and north and a low pitched roof. Under the roofline are small wooden brackets. The main three-bay facade, that facing west, has three doorways, one double and two single. The doors and elongated second-floor windows are arched at the top in the Italianate style. All of the windows of the building and the doors on the north gable end are capped with keyed lintels. Vernacular rose windows are in the center of both gable ends.

The main entry vestibule has two stairways leading to the second floor. The ceilings and walls of the vestibule are covered with ornamental tin sheets. The same ornamentation is continued on the second floor.

The main floor consists of four offices and a large meeting room. Above the main entry vestibule is the sanctuary vestibule; and above the large meeting room and offices is the sanctuary, panelled in elaborately-carved, dark-stained wood. A gallery is on the north, west, and south walls. Stairs to the gallery lead from the chancel in the east end of the sanctuary and from the sanctuary vestibule.

The original tracker organ is in the chancel. The wooden mechanism remains; however, the blower is now electric. A local organ maker made this organ and also one other, now in Delaware City.

Old Asbury has not always been a large two-story structure. As originally built in 1789, it was a one-story brick building, 35 foot square with a gallery at the west end and a pulpit at the east end. There was also a four-foot-high wall down the middle of the church to separate the sexes. Portions of the original 1789 structure are still visible in the vestibule of the present building.

In 1811 the building was enlarged 20 feet to the east. By 1825 it had again been added to and was 70 by 50 feet. Galleries were added on the north and south, but it remained one story. In 1838 the church was again enlarged; it was extended 10 feet on the west to form a vestibule.

The second floor was added in 1845 when the main floor was lowered two feet and the walls increased by 7 feet, 6 inches. The first floor became much as it is today with four classrooms (now offices), two on each side of the hallway, and a lecture room (50 by 38 feet) in the back. Galleries, 11 feet, 6 inches wide, were built on the north, west, and south walls of the sanctuary.

The elaborate interior paneling was added in 1873. The chapel wing to the north was added in 1875 and the exterior was stuccoed. Finally, the large tracker organ was installed in 1896.

Today, Old Asbury sits on the corner of Third and Walnut streets and is surrounded by an iron fence within which is also the original graveyard which contains the grave of Captain Allan McJannet, a noted Delaware Revolutionary officer. Very few eighteenth- or nineteenth-century structures remain in this part of Wilmington. Indeed to the south of the church is the Asbury Garden Apartment Complex, a low-rent urban redevelopment unit. Thus, Old Asbury remains a reminder of the period when this part of Wilmington was a substantial residential section.

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
—PREHISTORIC	—ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	—COMMUNITY PLANNING	—LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	X-RELIGION	
—1400-1499	—ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	—CONSERVATION	—LAW	—SCIENCE	
—1500-1599	—AGRICULTURE	—ECONOMICS	—LITERATURE	—SCULPTURE	
—1600-1699	X-ARCHITECTURE	—EDUCATION	—MILITARY	—SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
X-1700-1799	—ART	—ENGINEERING	—MUSIC	—THEATER	
X-1800-1899	—COMMERCE	—EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	—PHILOSOPHY	—TRANSPORTATION	
—1900-	—COMMUNICATIONS	—INDUSTRY	—POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	—OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		—INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Old Asbury Methodist Church was the first Methodist church in Wilmington. It has been continuously used by Methodists since its construction. Old Asbury is also significant because the three founding bishops of the Methodist Church in America preached there. The physical growth of the church reflects the corresponding development of Methodism in Delaware from a small, much-harassed group to the largest Protestant denomination in the state. Old Asbury is also significant because of its architecture.

Methodism first came to Wilmington in the 1760's when Captain Thomas Webb preached to interested groups under the trees at the corner of King and Kent streets. The Methodists next moved to Captain James Gilpin's storehouse on King Street wharf. Other locations were used by the group, including James Thelwell's house at King and Third streets and the Market House. In 1772 Francis Asbury, later Bishop of the Methodist Church, preached for the first time in Wilmington. Dr. Thomas Coke and Richard Whatcoat, both of whom also became bishops, preached to Wilmington's nascent congregation.

The Wilmington Methodists were a small, but heroic, group of men and women who were harassed continually by non-Methodists. On May 12, 1789, the group acquired a lot on the corner of Third and Walnut streets, the site of the present church, from Caleb and Sarah Way for \$103. The original one-story church was built that summer and was dedicated by Francis Asbury on October 16, 1789.

The founding congregation included 43 white members and 19 Black members. The Black membership was active and grew to about 100 by 1803. In that year they left Old Asbury to form their own congregation. Zion Church at Ninth and French streets was founded by them.

Old Asbury grew rapidly after 1805 and was one of the largest and most active churches in Wilmington during the nineteenth century. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, Old Asbury has felt the missionary zeal. Here met the Ladies Aid, Women's Foreign Missionary Society, Woman's Home Missionary and Home Circle, King's Daughters, and Christian Endeavor. The records of the church and its various missionary organizations are at the Delaware Archives in Dover.

In the twentieth century the membership began to decline as the white population of Wilmington moved to the suburbs. Because there were several active Black churches in the area, Old Asbury could not attract substantial numbers of new members from the growing Black community. An attempt was made in the 1950's to attract Blacks to the church when the church was turned over to the Colored Methodist Church; however, it was unsuccessful and the church was taken over by the Methodist Conference of Wilmington.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Asbury Methodist Church Records, mss. 929.3 A1, Delaware Archives, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware.

Hallman, F. C., *Garden of Methodism*, 1949.

History of Asbury Church, mss. 929.3 A1, Vol. V, Delaware Archives, Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2 ACRES

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 0	4, 5, 2	19, 7, 0	4, 3, 9	8, 6, 1, 0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING		EASTING	NORTHING	
C				d					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Old Asbury is bounded on the west by Walnut Street, on the north by Third Street, on the east by the back property line, and on the south by the side property line.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE

Susanne N. Fox, Research Archivist

ORGANIZATION

Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE

May 17, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

Hall of Records

TELEPHONE

(302) 678-5314

CITY OR TOWN

Dover

STATE

Delaware

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL XL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Lauren Casey

TITLE

Director, Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs

DATE

7/30/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

11/0/86

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11/2/76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	UG 2 1976
I''	
DATE ENTERED	NOV 2 1976

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

Today it is run by the Methodist Action Program as a community center and continues in the missionary tradition of the church.

Although modified by its several additions, Old Ashbury has outstanding Victorian detail added in the 1870's. The tin-plate wall coverings in the vestibules and sanctuary and the ceiling plasterwork and light fixtures in the sanctuary are well executed and well preserved.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED AUG 2 1978

DATE ENTERED

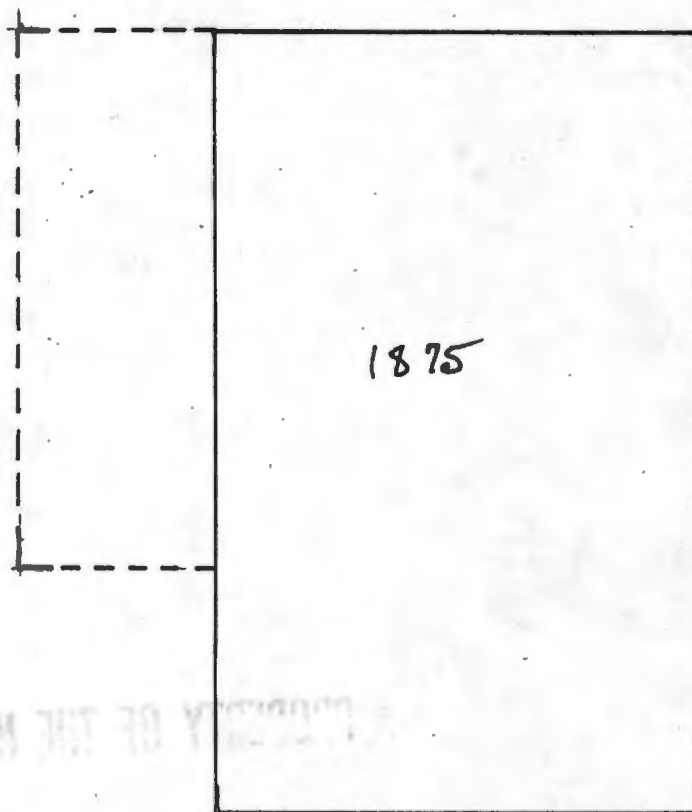
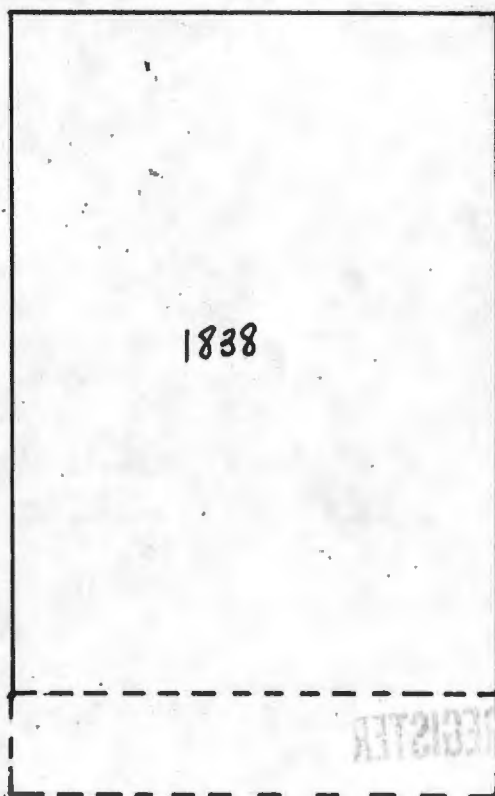
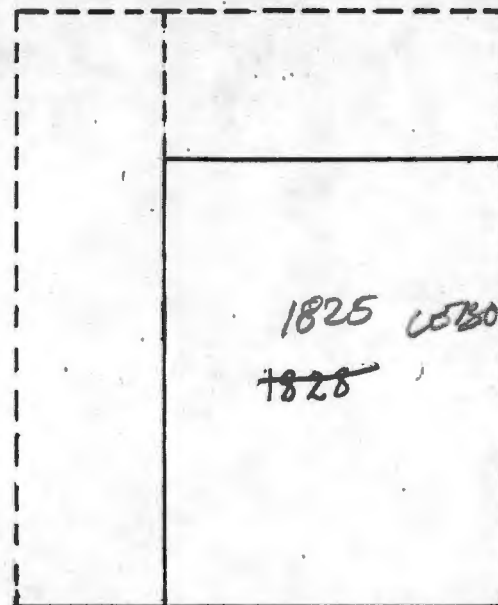
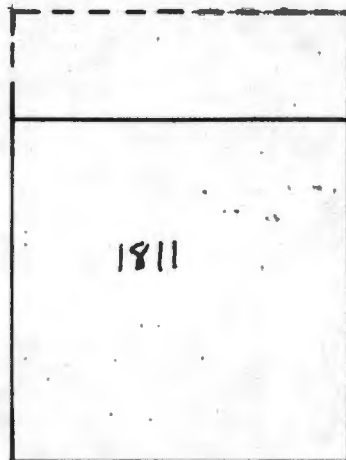
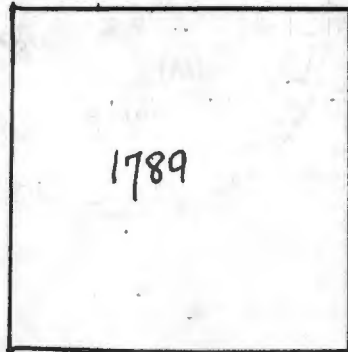
NOV 7 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

~~Lincoln, Anna T., Wilmington, Delaware: Three Centuries Under Four Flags, 1609-1937.~~
Rutland, Vermont: The Tuttle Publishing Company, Inc., 1937:



OLD ASBURY
CHURCH



not to scale



NOV 7 1976

jjjJ

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

#

Property **Old Asbury Methodist Church**

76000578

State **Delaware**

Working Number **8.2.76.3894**

NEW CASTLE

TECHNICAL

Photos 6
Maps 1

CONTROL

OK 8.5.76

HISTORIAN

Accept
J. G. Rowland
10/28/76

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

Accept
10/28/76

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____
Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

BRANCH CHIEF

Accept
Cole
10/28/76
KEEPER

W
11/2/76

National Register Write-up
National Register Write-up
Federal Register Entry
Federal Register Entry

12-7-76

Send-back _____
Re-submit _____

Entered **NOV 7 1976**

INT-2186-74



ONE
WAY
←

NAME: Old Asbury Methodist Church
LOCATION: Wilmington, Delaware *New Castle Co.*
PHOTOGRAPHER: Sue Fox
DATE: April 1976
LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware
DESCRIPTION: North side and facade of Old Asbury taken
from northwest.
PHOTO NUMBER: 1

AUG 2 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NOV 7 1976



NAME: Old Asbury Methodist Church
LOCATION: Wilmington, Delaware *New Castle Co.*
PHOTOGRAPHER: Sue Fox
DATE: April 1976
LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: Hall of Records, Dover, Delaware
DESCRIPTION: South side and facade of Old Asbury
taken from southwest.
PHOTO NUMBER: 2

^{AUG 2 1976}
PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NOV 7 1976



NAME: Old Asbury Methodist Church
LOCATION: Wilmington, Delaware *New Castle Co.*
PHOTOGRAPHER: Ned Heite
DATE: July 1976
LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: Hall of Records, Dover
DESCRIPTION: Ceiling detail and light fixture
in sanctuary
PHOTO NUMBER: 3

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

AUG 2 1976



NAME: Old Asbury Methodist Church
LOCATION: Wilmington, Delaware *New Castle Co.*
PHOTOGRAPHER: Ned Heite
DATE: July 1976
LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: Hall of Records, Dover
DESCRIPTION: Sanctuary of church showing organ taken
from west
PHOTO NUMBER: 4

AUG 2 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

REC'D 1976



NAME: Old Asbury Methodist Church
LOCATION: Wilmington, Delaware *New Castle Co.*
PHOTOGRAPHER: Ned Heite
DATE: July 1976
LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: Hall of Records, Dover
DESCRIPTION: Organ in sanctuary of church taken
from west
PHOT NUMBER: 5

AUG 2 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

100



NAME: Old Asbury Methodist Church
LOCATION: Wilmington, Delaware *New Castle Co.*
PHOTOGRAPHER: Ned Heite
DATE: July 1976
LOCATION OF NEGATIVE: Hall of Records, Dover
DESCRIPTION: Ceiling detail
PHOTO NUMBER: 6

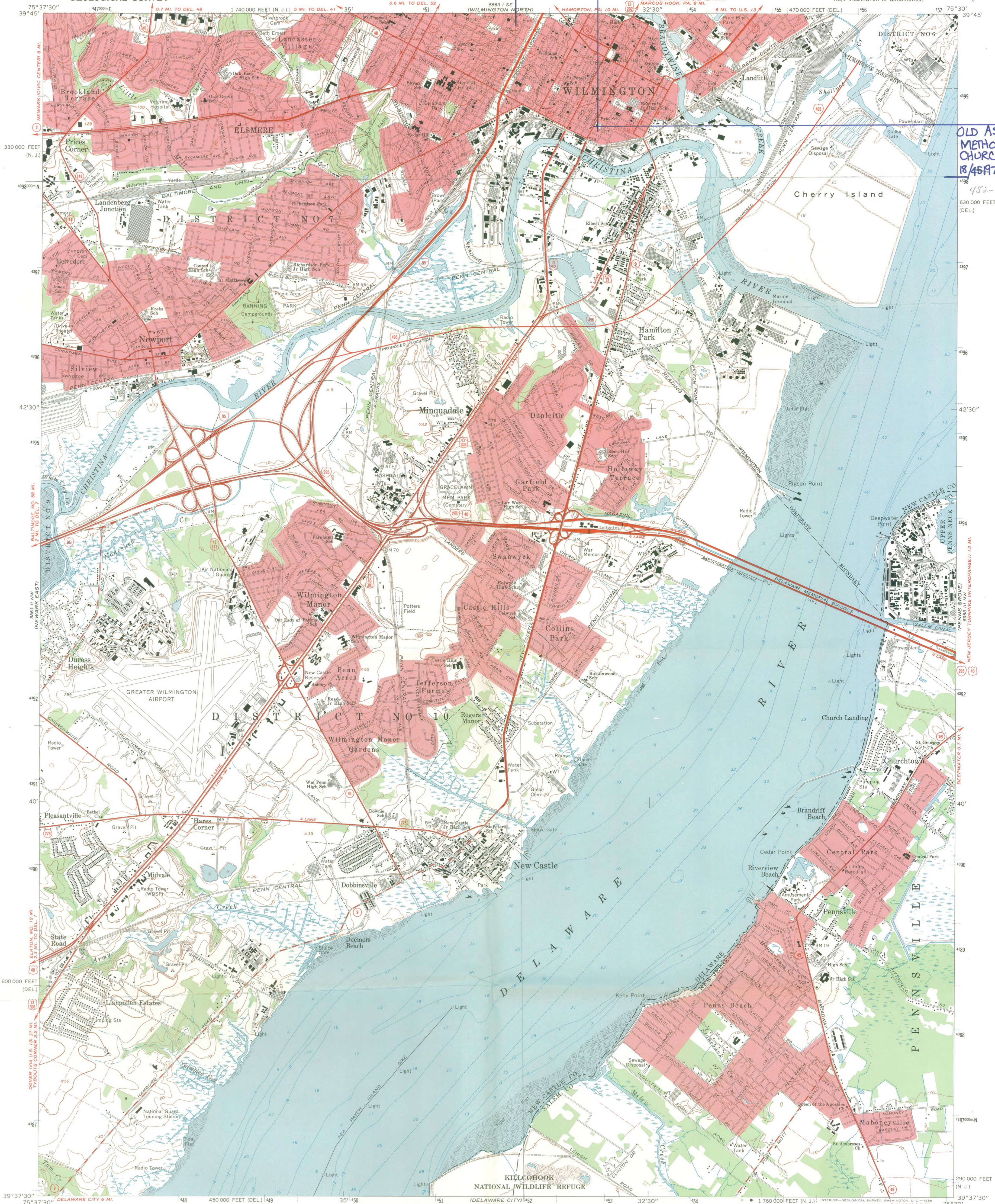
AUG 2 1976

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

AUG 2 1976

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WILMINGTON SOUTH QUADRANGLE
DELAWARE-NEW JERSEY
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NE/4 WILMINGTON 15' QUADRANGLE



OLD ASBURY
METHODIST
CHURCH
1845/170/4398610

453-
630 000 FEET
(DEL.)

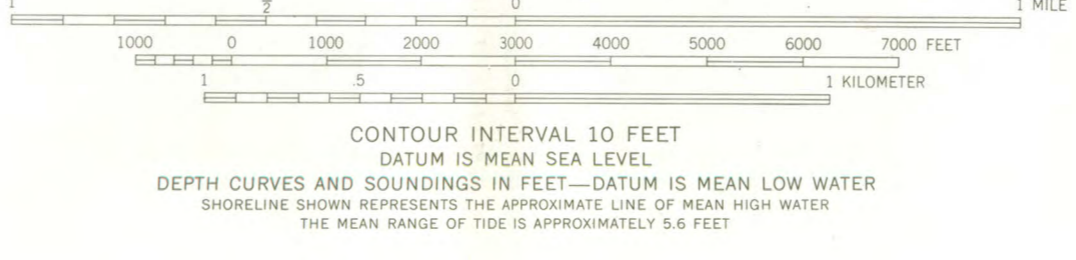
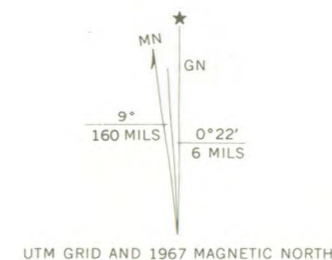
NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE INTERCHANGE 1/2 MI.

DEEPWATER 0.7 MI.

SALEM 4.5 MI.

SALEM 11 MI.

Mapped by U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey
Edited and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1946
Topography by planimetric surveys 1946. Field checked 1948
Revised by the Geological Survey from aerial photographs
taken 1965. Field checked 1967
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 294 (1966)
This information is not intended for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grids based on Delaware and New Jersey coordinate systems
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 18, shown in blue
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked
Red tint indicates areas in which only landmark buildings are shown



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

RECEIVED
AUG 2 1976
NATIONAL REGISTER

WILMINGTON SOUTH, DEL. - N. J.
NE/4 WILMINGTON 15' QUADRANGLE
N3937.5-W7530.7.5
1967
AMS 5863 II NE-SERIES V832



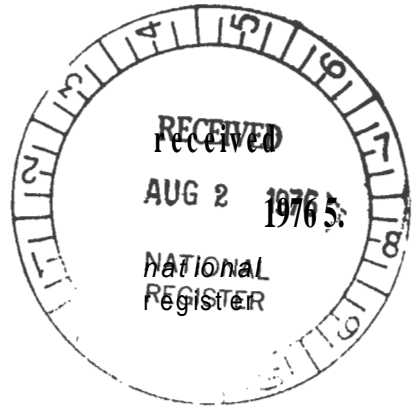
STATE OF DELAWARE
 DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs
 Hall of Records
 Dover, Delaware 19901
 (302) 678-5314

ROBERT H. REED
 Secretary of State
 LAWRENCE C. HENRY
 Director

life."

July 30, 1976

Dr. William J. Murtagh
 Keeper of the National Register
 Office of Archeology & Historic Preservation
 Office of Archeology & Historic Preservation
 National Park Service
 Department of the Interior
 Department of the Interior
 Washington, D. C. 20240
 Washington, D. C. 20240



Dear Bill:

I enclose forms nominating the Old Asbury Methodist Church to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions regarding this nomination, please contact Susanne N. Fox at the above number.

Sincerely,
 Sincerely,

Lawrence C. Henry
 Lawrence C. Henry
 Director/State Historic
 Preservation Officer

LCH/SNF:pkg
 LCH/SNF:pkg

Enclosures
 Enclosures

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER
~~ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER~~

STATE DELAWARE

Date Entered NOV 7 1976
~~Date Entered~~ Nov 7 me

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Vogel House	Masten's Corner vicinity Masten's Corner vicinity Kent County Kent County
Old Asbury Methodist Church	Wilmington Wilmington New Castle County New Castle County
Friends Meetinghouse	Wilmington Wilmington New Castle County New Castle County
St. Joseph's On the Brandywine	Greenville Greenville New Castle County New Castle County

Also Notified

Hon. William V. Roth, Jr.
Hon. William V. Roth, Jr.
Hon. Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Hon. Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Hon. Pierre S. duPont, IV
Hon. Pierre S. duPont, IV

Regional Director, Mid Atlantic
Regional Director, Mid Atlantic
Region

880
880

Mott
Mott

11/10/76
11/10/76

State Historic Preservation Officer
State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Lawrence C. Henry
Mr. Lawrence C. Henry
Director, Division of Historical and
Director, Division of Historical and
Cultural Affairs
Cultural Affairs
Hall of Records
Hall of Records
Dover, Delaware 19901
Dover, Delaware 19901

NR Data Sheet

DATE: 10/27/76
 REVIEWER: [initials]
 INITIALS: BG
 BOE: [initials]
 NR
 13/6

NAME AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER: Old Asbury Methodist Church
 AS IT APPEARS IN FEDERAL REGISTER: Asbury Methodist Church

OTHER NAMES:

LOCATION:

STREET NUMBER: 1001 and 3rd Sts.
 CITY/TOWN: Wilmington
 STATE: Delaware 10
 VICINITY OF: New Castle
 COUNTY: Essex
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 1st

OWNER OF PROPERTY: (Circle) PRIVATE STATE LOCAL GOV'T MUNICIPAL COUNTY OTHER

ADMINISTRATOR (underline):
 FEDERAL AGENCY NAME:
 NPS REGION: (CIRCLE) N. ATLANTIC MID ATLANTIC SOUTHEAST MIDWEST
 SOUTHWEST ROCKY MOUNTAIN WEST PACIFIC NORTHWEST

FEATURES:

INTERIOR: - Substantially intact-1
 EXTERIOR: - Substantially intact-2
 ENVIRONS: - Substantially intact-3
 - unknown-4
 - unknown-5
 - unknown-6
 - not applicable-7
 - not applicable-8
 - Not applicable-9

CONDITION: LUXURIENT GOOD FAIR
 DETERIORATED RUINS UNEXPOSED UNEXCAVATED
 ALTERED RECONSTRUCTED EXCAVATED
 ORIGINAL SITE MOVED UNKNOWN

ACCESS: Yes-restricted Yes-unrestricted No access Unknown
 historic district? YES NO

WITHIN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT? YES NO
 IF YES, NAME:
 WITHIN NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK? YES NO
 IF YES, NAME:

ADAPTIVE USE: © NO Saved? YES NO

FUNCTION(S): (use vocabulary words)

then- church
 now- community center

SIGNIFICANCE:

- ARCHAEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC
- ARCHAEOLOGY-HISTORIC
- AGRICULTURE
- ARCHITECTURE
- ART
- COMMERCE
- COMMUNICATIONS
- CONSERVATION
- ECONOMICS
- EDUCATION
- ENGINEERING
- EXPLORATION
- INDUSTRY
- INVENTION
- LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
- EXAV Gov't/politics
- LITERATURE
- MILITARY
- MUSIC
- PHILOSOPHY
- POLITICS/GOVERNMENT
- RELIGION
- SCIENCE
- SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER (SPECIFY)
- entertainment
- health
- health
- recreation
- settlement
- 20th socio/cultural
- urban & commun
- Urban & comun planning

Claims

"first" YES NO **oldest** YES NO "only" YES NO

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE: **ITALIANATE** elements

architect/on builder:

landscape/garden designer:

interior decorator:

engineer:

artist/artisan:

builder/contractor:

ETHNIC GROUP: *Black*

NAMES:

(label role & appropriate date)

personal

James Coke, Richard Whatcoat, Francis Asbury - early leaders of the Methodist Church in America, who preached here. Francis Asbury dedicated the church

events

institutional

Epion Church - church founded by Blacks who were originally members of Old Asbury

DATES:

date of construction (Specific date or 1/4 of century): *1789*

DATE(S) OF "MAJOR" ALTERATIONS: *1811, 1828, 1838, 1875*

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT DATE(S):

SOURCE:

(OF NOMINATION)

PRIVATE

STATE

LOCAL GOV'T

MUNICIPAL

COUNTY

OTHER

FEDERAL AGENCY:

ACREAGE:

(to nearest tenth of an acre)

COMMENTS: (include architectural information here)

Place (see Sec 09) of C. & A. » 2 S. eoady, L. shape Co. Mine. With "W. J. Cent. Of" Island Coc. Kiver.

ROUND ARCHED WINDOWS, OCELLUS WINDOW WITHIN GABLE

SIGNIFICANCE (Maximum two sentences)

elements.

Old Asbury Methodist Church was the first Methodist church in Wilmington, and has been used continuously by Methodists since its construction; it was a center for community activity during the 18th C.; ~~now operated by the Methodist Action Program as a community center.~~

THE CHURCHES OF DELAWARE

by

FRANK R. ZEBLEY

Author of "Along the Brandywine"



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

1947

Central Baptist Church was organized by a group who withdrew from North Baptist on Oct. 2, 1927. They held their meetings in Eden Hall. The group disbanded in 1929.

The Union Street Baptist Mission was conducted during the period including Jan. 1, 1887, at 17th and Union Sts.

The McDowellville Baptist Mission, at 11th and Dupont Sts., was built and donated to Delaware Ave. Baptist Church, in 1871, by Philip McDowell. The chapel was dedicated on May 18, 1879 at 3:30 P. M. by the Rev. Isaac W. Haldeman.

The Third Baptist Church on 12th St., between Market and Orange Sts., was organized on Apr. 6, 1858 with the Rev. Samuel Earle, as pastor.

METHODIST

Asbury Methodist Church (M.E.). In 1766, Captain Thomas Webb, a retired British Army officer and one of the Methodism's early missionaries, preached in a small grove of trees at 8th and King Sts. After a series of these meetings, the first indoor meeting of Methodists worshipped in the upper story of Jos. Gilpin's storehouse on King St. wharf. A short time later they were invited to meet in the schoolhouse of John Thelwell at the s. e. cor. 3rd and King Sts. Some meetings were also held in the cooper-shop of Geo. Witsill, on Water St. east of Market St. It was in Mr. Thelwell's school that an organization was effected. Francis Asbury preached in Wilmington on Aug. 14, 1772 and again on Feb. 28, 1775. Preaching was held at times in the home of J. Stidham.

Harry, the negro traveling companion and servant of Mr. Asbury, although illiterate, became quite famed for his preaching in Wilmington and at other places. On May 12, 1789, a lot of land near the s. e. cor. 3rd and Walnut Sts. was purchased as a site for a church, from Caleb Way, for 105 pounds.

The corner-stone was laid in the summer of 1789 and the church was dedicated on Oct. 14, 1789, by Bishop Asbury for whom it was named. On that date Mr. Asbury notes in his Journal, "thus far we come after twenty years labor in this place." The church had a high pulpit and a gallery. The Bible desk was built of open framework and the leader of the singing was seated directly beneath the desk. When a hymn was announced he would come out, to lead the singing, after which he would return to his bench. The seats were of plank with a single-rail back. A partition 4 ft. high extended down the center of the church, dividing the men from the women. Outside, a 7 ft. fence extended from the church to the wall at the front of the property, the men and women entering through separate gates. To the right and left of the pulpit were the "Amen corners" where the oldest members would be seated.

During the first ten or twelve years the members of Asbury were subjected to many indignities and unruly men and boys disturbed all of the meetings. It became necessary for the safety of the members to hold the evening meetings early so that they could be dismissed before dark. On Sept. 23, 1800, a resolution was passed appointing a committee to combat this growing evil. Advertisements, threatening prosecution of the offenders, were placed in the local papers. These advertisements seemed to have had the desired effect.

The church was incorporated and trustees were elected on May 25, 1802. At a meeting of the trustees held on July 17, 1802 steps were taken to build

a parsonage. The parsonage, built of frame, was erected south of the church, in the fall of 1802. On June 18, 1808, Hannah Pierce donated 50 sq. perches of land to the church. On June 21, 1809, the parsonage was surrendered to the mortgagee, who moved it to the corner, north of the church. On Oct. 19, 1818, Edward Worrell donated the corner lot to the church. The house was then used as a sexton's home until 1853, when it was sold and moved to 7th and Church Sts.

By 1805, Asbury Church had 100 negroes on its roll, who ordinarily used the galleries during services. The colored membership had become so large that it was felt necessary that they use the main floor for their class meetings. But their enthusiasm ran so high and some of them were so careless in their activities that on June 19, 1805, the trustees passed a resolution requiring the negroes to hold all of their meetings in the galleries. It was during this year that, through the efforts of Asbury Church, Ezion Church was organized and built. In 1809, a few of the members, who wished to sit in a group and lead in the singing, erected a door to one of the benches in the gallery in order to reserve this bench for themselves. This resulted in a resolution being passed on June 21, 1809, directing the sexton to remove the door and to keep the entrance to all benches open to anyone.

In 1811, the length of the church was increased 20 ft. In 1818, the church was severely damaged by a storm but repairs were made immediately. In 1822, a building was erected, south of the church, for Sunday School and day-school purposes. On Dec. 2, 1824, the trustees decided to install sperm-oil lamps to replace the candles which had been used up to this time. On Mar. 11, 1828, it was decided to enlarge the church and to have galleries on three sides. In 1829, the infant department built a two-story brick day-school on Shipley St., near 4th St. This school was very successful for a time but, burdened by debt, the building was surrendered, in 1832, to the trustees who converted it into a parsonage and it was used as such until 1843.

It appears that some of the evening meetings would be continued until midnight or later. On Jan. 16, 1829, the trustees directed the sexton to close the building at 10 o'clock, with some exceptions. Space for graves in the burying-ground would be sold to non-members but members of the church were not required to pay. In 1826, it was decided that unless a member was paid up and in good standing, he would have to pay for graves. This decision was appealed on Aug. 14, 1830, but the trustees refused the appeal.

On Aug. 20, 1832, the trustees decided that men and women could use the same doors but they must still be seated separately, the men on the left and the women on the right. Extensive enlargements were made in 1838, including two classrooms in back of the gallery. In 1839, one hundred years after Methodism was organized in England and fifty years after the dedication of Asbury, a Centenary celebration was held. The religious observance was held on Sun., Oct. 25, 1839. A modern pulpit was installed in 1840. While the Rev. Anthony Atwood was pastor, in 1845, the church was converted into a two-story building with a lecture-room for Sunday School purposes on the first floor. It was during this year that promiscuous sitting was first permitted. In 1846, a portion of the newly-built roof was blown off but repairs were made immediately.

In 1851, after a discussion lasting five years, the sperm-oil lamps were replaced by gas illumination. In 1872, general improvements were made, including a recess pulpit. The rededication services were held on Sun., Jan. 19, 1873. The guest of honor was the Rev. Father Boehm, aged 97 years. He had been Bishop Asbury's traveling companion and served as Presiding Elder of

the Wilmington District in 1813. The morning service was conducted by the Rev. John Simms, D.D., LL.D., assisted by the Revs. J. B. Quigg and A. Atwood. The afternoon service was conducted by the Rev. Jacob Todd and Father Boehm gave a short talk. The dedicatory sermon was preached at the evening service by the Rev. Dr. Simms.

In 1885, the building was enlarged and improved after which reopening services were held on Nov. 8, 1885. The services were in charge of the Rev. Dr. C. N. Simms and the Rev. Dr. J. Richards Boyle. After extensive improvements the church was rededicated on Nov. 20, 1898, at the evening service by the Rev. Dr. B. I. Ives and Pres. Elder Robert Watt. The new pipe-organ was also dedicated.

On Mar. 27, 1904, after the Rev. H. S. Dulaney had delivered his farewell sermon, the congregation gathered around him, when a floor beam cracked but the floor held and no one was injured. Improvements were made in 1908. On Oct. 3, 1937, five memorial windows were dedicated.

The Sunday School. In 1818, three of the women members of Asbury were inspired to open a Sunday School. The Sunday School was organized in the church but the trustees ruled that only girls could attend as boys were vandals by nature and would cut the benches and woodwork with their knives, which they probably would have done, unless restrained. The organizers would not agree to this but secured the use of a house on the s. w. cor. 2nd and Walnut Sts., owned by John Taylor, where both boys and girls were received. Later the school moved to the loft over David Bush's storehouse at 6-8 e. Front St. The next move was to a frame building at the n. w. cor. Sixth and King Sts. Sunday school was held in the morning after which the entire school marched, two abreast, to Asbury Church for the preaching service. The school grew so fast and the interest was so great that the Asbury officials were obliged to recognize the work and to promise encouragement.

On July 5, 1819, a meeting was called in the church and a Sunday School was duly organized with constitution, by-laws and elected officials. On Apr. 25, 1822, the trustees decided to erect a frame building, south of the church, for the use of the Sunday School. The building was completed on Aug. 2, 1822 and the Sunday School moved from 6th and King Sts. to their new building in the fall. Meetings were held here until 1835 when the main building was utilized. A lending library was established on Mar. 13, 1827. By 1837, the Sunday School had grown to such proportions that two schools had been organized as No. 1 and No. 2 school, one meeting in the lecture-room and the other in the auditorium. In September, 1869, the two schools were combined.

St. Paul's Methodist Church (M.E.) was organized on Jan. 26, 1844, at the home of Hyland B. Pennington, s. e. cor. 4th and Market Sts. The Rev. John Kennaday, pastor of Asbury Church, was in charge of the meeting. Committees were appointed and on Mar. 7, 1844, a church site, on Market St., above 7th St., was purchased from John McKnight. The erection of a church was started immediately. The corner-stone was laid on June 4, 1844. The trustees adopted the pew system, quite an innovation in a Methodist church which resulted in St. Paul's being called "the silk-stocking church" for many years. The church was dedicated on Thurs. afternoon, Mar. 13, 1845.

Prayer was offered by the Rev. Mr. Ridgeley and the dedicating sermon was preached by the Rev. Mr. Kennaday on the text—Psalms 27, verses 4 and 5. The benediction was pronounced by the Rev. Mr. Wynkoop. The services were continued on Sunday when the Rev. Levi Scott, A.M., preached in the morning and the Rev. Joseph Castle, A.M., in the afternoon. The amount col-

INVENTORY OF THE CHURCH
ARCHIVES OF DELAWARE

by the

HISTORICAL RECORDS SURVEY

PRELIMINARY DRAFT NOW BEING
CHECKED FOR FINAL ACCURACY

MARCH 1940

Binder #1

WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL AND SERVICE PROJECTS

OLD POST OFFICE BLDG.

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

Asbury Methodist Episcopal Church, Wilmington (entry 200) on March 17, 1869. Incorporated by act of the Assembly on April 1st of the same year (Del. Laws, vol. 13, chap. 418). Delaware and the eastern Shore counties of Maryland and Virginia are included in this conference which is divided into three districts with district superintendents located at Wilmington, Dover, and Salisbury (Md.)

Missions, many of which have later developed into churches, have been established from time to time by the conference usually in co-operation with the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension, a Pennsylvania corporation with offices in Philadelphia (see forthcoming Inventory of the Church Archives of Pennsylvania). Deeds records covering Delaware churches in the name of this board are listed with those of the conference. The Wilmington City Missionary and Church Extension Society incorporated in 1900, functioned as a part of the conference, but have been inactive for some years.

In 1871 a committee was formed to organize an historical society but no action seems to have been taken until 1864 when a society was formed, whose annual reports are incorporated in the conference minutes. Minutes of the conference prior to 1900 contain numerous references to camp meetings but they seem to have declined rapidly after that date. They were seldom separate organizations but were informal gatherings under the auspices of an individual church or a group of churches meeting in private groves, the use of which had been granted the church for that purpose. Nevertheless many were held regularly over long periods of time and a few, notably Rehoboth (entry 298) and Camden Union (entry 276) were separate corporations with their own property. The conference is a part of the Washington Area. First president was Bishop Matthew Simpson, 1869-70. Present Bishop is Rev. Edwin H. Hughes, 100 Maryland Ave. N.N. Washington; D. C. District Superintendents are Rev. Walter R. Gunby, 2705 Harrison St., Wilmington; Rev. Ernest C. Hallman, Dover, and Rev. John J. Bunting, Salisbury, Md.

Minutes, 1869-- , 17 bound vols. (4 annual books per vol.) in possession of secretary, Rev. John R. Bicking, Crisfield, Md. Duplicate set in Wilmington Institute Free Library. Records of incorporation and deeds: New Castle. Recorder's office; Deeds Record; vol. R2, p. 472; vol. K5, p.254; vol. K14, p.215; vol. C36, p. 378; vol. B39, p. 64; vol. E39, p. 19; vol. K39, p. 306; vol. L39, p. 193; vol. R39, p. 466; vol. U39, p. 85; vol. E40, p. 66; vol. I40, p. 230 and 360; vol. H40, p. 55; Certificate of Incorporation; vol.F3, p. 67; Kent Co. Recorder's office, Deeds Record; vol.M8, p. 487; Mortgage Records; vol. O2, pp. 141 , 180 and 337; vol. O4, p. 424; vol. R4, p. 21; Assignment Record; vol. E1, p. 427. Del. Laws; vol. 13, chap. 418; vol. 23, chap. 86.

200. ASBURY METHODIST CHURCH, 1769-- , 3rd and Walnut Sts., Wilmington.

Informal open air services held at King and 8th Sts. in 1769 by Capt. Thomas Webb of the English Army resulted in formal organization shortly thereafter. Services held until 1786 in Capt. Joseph Gilpin's storehouse on King St. wharf. Then in School of John Thelwell, 3rd and King Sts., until 1789 when present building was opened and dedicated by Bishop Francis Asbury. The original plot of ground on which the church was built was much smaller than the present property. Additional adjustment lots were secured from time to time, some by gift, and some by purchase. Property on Shipley St. between High and Queen Sts. (now 4th and 5th Sts.), was purchased January 1, 1825 for the purpose of building a school. Property on the west side of King St. just north of 7th was purchased for a parsonage on January 7, 1843 but being heavily mortgaged and the trustees unable to meet the mortgage

it was foreclosed and the property sold March 10, 1847. Brick church, colonial style. Circular balcony for slaves added later and in recent year's exterior stuccoes. Bronze tablet in memory of members who died in the World War placed on Front of church in 1932. Churchyard contains graves of many noteworthy early residents. On front wall of church is a bronze tablet erected by the Historic Commission of Delaware. First settled clergyman, Rev. William Jossup, 1789-90. See: Rev. John D.C. Hanna, The Centennial Services (Wilmington, Delaware Printing Co. 1889. 295 pp.); Henry S. Bulany, History and Directory of Pastors of the Asbury M. E. Church (Wilmington, 1903, 71 pp.). Rev. Charles E. Davis, Asbury M. E. Church year Book Wilmington, 1934); articles in Wilmington newspapers, Evening Journal, Oct. 13, 1924, July 2, 1927; Morning News, Oct. 13, 1924.

Minutes, 1811--, 5 vols.; Register, 1810--, 5 vols.; Financial records, 1807--, 3 vols.; Sunday School, 1822--, 3 vols.; in church office. Record of members in 1803 and also list of charter members is contained in Scharf History of Delaware, vol. 2. A few marriage records, 1788- 89, are found in the same vol. Copy of tombstone inscriptions in churchyard, prepared by Historical Records Survey 1938, in State Archives. Records of incorporation and deeds: New Castle Co. Recorder's office, Deeds Record: vol. S3, p. 170; vol. V2 p. 541; vol. E2, p. 635; vol. G3, p. 16; vol. U3, p. 220; vol. Z3, p. 313; vol. B4, pp. 77 and 423; vol. G4, p. 291; vol. K5, p. 355; vol. U5, p. 13; vol. R12, p. 133; vol. D20, p. 169; vol.D29, p.335; vol. M30, p. 572; vol. V33, p. 32.

201. MOUNT LEBANON METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 1774--, 1/8th of a mile N. of Rockland.

Organized 1774. For many years it was part of Chester Circuit. Services were held in private homes, 1774-1834. Present building was dedicated 1834. It is a one story stone structure with tower, belles and eight stained glass memorial windows. First settled clergyman, Rev. James W. McGaw, 1868-70.

Minutes, 1834--, 2 vols.; in possession of Elizabeth Murray, R. F. D. 2, Wilmington. Register, 1834--, 2 vols.; in possession of pastor, Rev. Walter E. Fosnecht, Cleveland Ave., McDaniel Heights. Financial, 1834--, 1 vol.; in possession of J. Ayers, R. F. D. 2, Wilmington. Sunday School, 1834--, 2 vols.; in possession of Hazel Talley, R. F. D. 2, Wilmington. Records of incorporation and deeds: New Castle Co. Recorder's office, Deeds Record; vol. Q7, p. 524; vol. L20, p. 144; vol. B38, p.185.

202. AVENUR METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, 1777--, Railroad Ave., Milford.

Organized 1777 as society of Methodists. Infernal services were held in the home of Reynear Williams until 1789 when a frame structure was erected . Additions made 1790-1800. In 1840 it was replaced by a one story brick structure. Exact site is uncertain but it is thought to have been at North and 3rd Sts., present church dedicated 1871. A one story brick structure with steeple and bell. First settled clergyman, Rev. William Ratecliff, 1789-90. See: Theodore Townsend "Historical Sketch of Church", in Conference Manual, (Milford, 1890); article in Wilmington Evening Journal, Dec. 18, 1926.

Minutes, 1845--, 11 vols., Register, 1852--, 12 vols.; Financial, 1914--, 2 vols.; Sunday School, 1827--, 12 vols.; in possession of pastor, Rev. Frank Person. Ladies' Aid Society, 1926--, 1 vol.; in possession of M. Haswell Pierce. Copy of tombstone inscriptions in old cemetery on North St. prepared by Historical Records Survey 1938, in State Archives. Records of