

# 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

It was made a separate parish on Jan. 1, 1945, by Bishop Edmond J. FitzMaurice.

**Seaford Baptists.** On Aug. 2, 1883, Angeline Vaughn donated a lot at the cor. of Hall St. and Harrington Ave., to the Del. Baptist Union upon which to build a church. The deed stipulated that the church should have an end gallery and if it was not built within fifteen years, the land should revert. No church was ever built.

There are three colored churches in Seaford. **The Church of God** was built in 1935. It was gutted by fire on Dec. 30, 1941 and was replaced by a larger church. **John Wesley M. E. Church** was founded in 1879. Land was purchased on May 26, 1881, from Annie K. Cannon and on Sept. 22, 1924, from Geo. W. Wright. On Dec. 5, 1930, the Seaford Special School District donated the school property adjacent to the church, so long as it should be used as a community-house. The congregation of the **Macedonia A. M. E. Church** purchased the frame church building from Bochim's Meeting-House and the church was established in 1861. The quarter-acre church site was purchased from Spencer Blocksom on Apr. 18, 1862. The church was rebuilt in 1879 and again in 1915.

**Blades Methodist Church (M.E.)** was originally called "Bladesville M. E. Church." The first church was built in 1871-72 and was located on Concord Road. The site was donated on Oct. 7, 1871, by James M. Blades. It was also called "Cannon's Chapel." They were incorporated on July 16, 1877. The old graveyard still remains and the oldest tombstone is that of John E. Taylor, who died in 1883.

On Nov. 15, 1887, a lot was secured on Main St., from Leonard J. Blades, and the corner-stone of a new church was laid on Dec. 7, 1887. It was dedicated on Jan. 13, 1889 and named "Gregg" in honor of the pastor. Those taking part in the services included the Revs. C. W. Prettyman, W. J. Duhadaway, J. H. Howard and W. E. England. The church was again incorporated on Jan. 26, 1921. The work of rebuilding the church was started in 1921 and the corner-stone was laid on Jan. 1, 1922. The church was rededicated on June 18, 1922 and the name "Blades M. E. Church" was adopted. The service was in charge of Bishop John W. Hamilton, assisted by Dist. Supt. W. R. Mowbray.

The Ladies' Aid Society purchased a lot on w. 4th St., on Aug. 22, 1928 from the Allen Pkg. Co. A large social-hall was built on this site. The name "Blades Methodist Church" was adopted in 1940.

**A Church of the Nazarene** was organized at Blades on Oct. 13, 1940. A new church building was finished in 1941. The church site, on w. 4th St., had been donated, by Wm. F. Allen, on Dec. 7, 1939.

**Concord Methodist Church (M.E.)** at Concord was organized in 1804. On Aug. 24, 1804, Robert Boyce conveyed to a board of trustees one-half of an acre of land upon which a church had been built. The interior of the church was never plastered and, in 1841, it was torn down and rebuilt. In 1870, a new church was built and it was dedicated on Oct. 9, 1870. Those taking part in the services included the Revs. J. B. Merritt, Jacob Todd, J. O. Sypherd and J. B. Mann, the pastor. The church was incorporated on Nov. 22, 1872. A parsonage for the circuit was purchased on Pine St., in Seaford, on Dec. 23, 1896 from James H. Boyce.

The church was remodeled, after which a reopening service was held on Sept. 12, 1937, by Dist. Supt. E. C. Hallman and the Rev. Louis Dennis, the pastor. The church bell hangs at the rear of the church on a framework of galvanized pipe. This is the only arrangement of this kind that the writer has seen in Delaware. There is a large graveyard, the tombstones dating back to 1862. In August of each year a home-coming is held here and many sons and daughters of Concord return for a visit.

**Mt. Calvary A. M. E. Church** at Concord was built in 1872. Trustees were elected on Oct. 10, 1874. Additional land was purchased on June 9, 1893, from Wm. Graham. The church was rebuilt in 1894 and in 1921. Land was donated to the church on Aug. 4, 1903, by Eliza Jane Stuart and on Feb. 1, 1922 by Joshua A. Ellegood.

**Gethsemane Methodist Church (M.P.)**. This church is located at Reliance, formerly known as Johnson's Crossroads. The first church was built, in 1835, on land granted by Tyrus Phillips. A half-acre of land was donated, on Nov. 13, 1850, by Tyrus S. Phillips. A new church was built in 1851. It was incorporated on Feb. 17, 1853. A third church was built in 1872. It had two stories and the second floor was used for a lodge room. An opening service was held on Nov. 17, 1872. This building was dedicated in 1889. The parsonage lot was purchased on Feb. 15, 1890 from Geo. H. Huston.

When the Rev. Thomas Wheeler was assigned to Gethsemane Church, he seriously objected to any part of a church building being used for secular purposes. He enlisted so many followers that a fourth church, the present one, was erected, in 1904, with no lodge room. This church was dedicated, in 1905, by the Rev. Thomas Wheeler. Extensive renovations were made in 1941, including the installation of electric lighting. There is a social-hall beside the church.

**Bethel Methodist Church (M.E.)** is located one mile north of Oak Grove on the western boundary line of Delaware. On Oct. 23, 1780, White Brown donated one acre of land, a part of his holdings called "Canaan," to Humphreys Brown, Wm. Ross, John Flowers, Henry Smith, Thos. Lyton, A. S. Hitch, Thos. White and Edward White, trustees. They agreed to erect "a preaching-house for the use of Methodist preachers or the friendly clergy of the Church of England." The chapel was built in 1781 and was called "Brown's Chapel."

Lemuel Davis, a local-preacher, and Jacob Kinder are credited with assisting in the building of the chapel and their descendants have ever since been numbered among the leading members of the church. The Rev. Mr. Davis was known for his popularity and for the large number of marriages that he performed. At one of these, the groom failed to give Mr. Davis any compensation. About one month later the minister met the man and remarked pleasantly to him: "You did not think to present me with anything for the service I rendered you recently." The groom replied with great emotion: "Mr. Davis, if you will unmarry me, I will pay you double."

The building was of frame construction with galleries on three sides and was not fully completed until 1806. On Mar. 5, 1807, it was incorporated as "Bethel Church." More land was purchased on Oct. 11, 1871, from John W. Twiford. The present church was built in 1894. Land was secured from James A. Lowe on July 22, 1920. A large, well-kept cemetery adjoins the church. The oldest tombstone is over the grave of Mary Davis, who died on Mar. 8, 1815. A short distance south of Bethel Church on the road to Oak