

With Regards of the Rev.

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A

HISTORY

OF THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

OF

SPRINGFIELD, N. Y.



PRESENTED IN A

MEMORIAL DISCOURSE,

BY RECOMMENDATION OF

The General Assembly,

TO THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION.

JULY 16, 1856.

BY REV. P. F. SANBORNE.



PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.



CHERRY VALLEY, N. Y.,

GAZETTE PRINT, UNION BLOCK.

1876.





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Book 3709 S 2

East Springfield 1877. Co. N.Y.
Feb. 1. 1878

Your letter received. I send
you by mail this day two
Copies of "Historical Discourse"
in which are brief incidents
of Brant's corruption into
Springfield in June 1778.

The only ones I could gather
or find tradition (no doubt
correct) when I prepared
the discourse. The local
ities of the burned dwellings
are readily recognized.

If you secure the Annals
of Inyon County by Judge
Campbell of Ch. Valley, it
might aid you in your life
to Brant. Respectfully yours
P. J. Sariborne



WRITE THE ADDRESS ON THIS SIDE - THE MESSAGE ON THE OTHER.

L. C. Draper Esq.

Madison,

Wisconsin.

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

AT

SPRINGFIELD, N. Y.

DEUTERONOMY XXXII—7.

Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father and he will shew thee, thy elders and they will tell thee.

Words more appropriate for the present occasion could not well be found. By recommendation of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of these United States each of the pastors in its extended commission is invited to prepare and present an Historical discourse, commemorative of his respective congregation, and afterward transmit a copy of the same to be deposited in the archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society at Philadelphia, thus to secure a faithful and true history of our beloved Church in America, from its beginnings.— It is my duty, as well as pleasure to gather up the facts touching the history of this individual church,—its origin, early years, and later growth, its vicissitudes of trial and prosperity—and trace the way in which the Great Shepherd has led his little flock hitherto.

Going back one hundred and fourteen years, to the year of our Lord, 1762, we find this now beautiful township, (then a part of Cherry Valley,) with its many comfortable habitations, its school houses and its sanctuaries, its sweet hills and cultured vales, one unbroken wilderness, a wild and romantic country in deed, *then*, with springs and brooks, rocks and dells, forest trees and wild mountain flowers, the charming lake calm as an infant asleep or sparkling as a gem set amid the hills. But no house of God was here, no human habitations, no cattle grazed among the pastures, no gardens or orchards of fruits beautified a single acre of the rich soil. The wild beast was here, the fox, the bear and the panther, and the wilder red man pursued his game on the streams and amid the forests. In the year 1762, thirteen years before the war of the Revolution opened, the first settlements were begun, five families taking up lands, viz: that of John Kelly, Richard Ferguson and James Young in the eastern section of the town, also by Gustavus Klumph and Jacob Tygart at the head of the lake. Very few were added to the number until after the war, though here and there a house constructed of rude logs sprang up on some hill or within some secluded vale. Cherry Valley had been occupied for twenty years: a company of Presbyterians, originally from Scotland, but a portion of the Colony that coming in 1719 to Londonderry in New Hampshire, emigrated hither in 1741. Rev. Samuel Dunlop was their minister. Their growth, though the town then included many of the present surrounding towns, was very slow. In 1752, twelve years after the first settlement, there were but eight families in the place, and in 1765, twenty five years from the settlement, there were but forty families.

It is difficult for us to form a just conception of the country as it was when the first five families commenced a house amid these forests and hills. Cherry Valley was but a little hamlet far out in the woods, a remote outpost of civilization in the *dis tant* west, as viewed by the inhabitants of New England and the dwellers on the Hudson. A few German families had occupied lands along the Mohawk and up the Schoharie Creek, but on leaving these streams north or south, the settler at once advanced into the primeval forest, and *restored* the entire country with few exceptions reaching to the Pacific Ocean, was a vast

unexplored wilderness. Indian trails were the only paths in any direction. And what added vastly more to the disagreeableness and hardships of the times, it was a period of great public excitement, alarm and peril. The French and Indian wars had hardly been concluded, and the terrible conflict of seven years with England was hastening on. The few scattered inhabitants then occupying this region were kept under almost constant apprehension of danger and attack from hostile Indians who bore no special friendship to the English, much less to the actual settlers in their ancient domains. The war broke out. Thirty-three individuals from the towns of Cherry Valley, Springfield and Middlefield espoused the American cause as soldiers, and consequently the remnant of the settlers were left in a defenseless condition. So seriously exposed at this time did the people in this region regard their situation that they caused the following letter to be written to the County Committee for relief. It bears date of June 3d, 1776, and was penned by Rev. Mr. Dunlop.

SIR:—"We, the inhabitants of Cherry Valley being assembled yesterday at a Public Town Meeting, and among other things taking the present critical situation of affairs into consideration, looked upon ourselves, and the neighborhood around us, Springfield and Newtown Martin (now Middlefield,) as a frontier lying very open and unguarded, and very much exposed to the enemy, in case an Indian war should break out, or any party of the enemy should take it into their heads to come down upon us, and that it would be absolutely necessary, to have a party of men stationed here among us, in order to keep a sharp lookout, and to scout all around our frontiers, lest at any time we be taken by surprise. And therefore, have appointed me to write you, to lay this matter warmly before the Committee and earnestly to impress them with the absolute necessity of the thing, and to beg of them that if Capt. McKean and his company be removed from this place, that they would be pleased to send some others in his stead, that we may not lie altogether naked and exposed to the assaults of the enemy."

The Committee of the County were unable to comply with this request; and then a petition of similar purport, signed by several of the inhabitants bearing date of July 1st, 1776, was addressed to the honorable members of the Provincial Congress of New York and the request was granted. It is for the civil historian to relate how far the very few that occupied these hills

shared in the sore perils of the first years of the war, their anxieties, their bravery and their sacrifices. Yet I may be indulged in an incident or two. In the battle of Oriskany, in which the insidious efforts of the traitorous party to lead over this region to the enemy was foiled, there were soldiers from Springfield and among them Capt. Thomas Davy, grandfather to the three brothers who still reside on the paternal acres, James, Jeremiah and Hurvy. He went forth to the fight after bidding good-bye to his wife and two little ones, (then living in a log house burned the next summer by Indians,) but never to return. He was doubtless shot in the battle. The noble white steed on which he rode was returned and his bereaved widow's first fears of his fate were started by his familiar whinneying heard at the distance of a mile. This was in August, 1777. In June of the following year, five months previous to the bloody massacre in Cherry Valley, the great Chieftain and Captain of the six nations, Joseph Brant, came to Springfield with a party, and burned the town, carrying away several prisoners, among them John and Jacob, two sons of Mr. Tygart, who were taken to Canada. "Brant collected together the women and children into one house and there left them uninjured, an act of mercy not always followed by his allies." Among the houses burned was one owned and occupied by Mr. Spalsbury, a few rods north of the present residence of Mr. Daniel Franklin. Another was that of widow Thomas Davy; she had prepared dinner for the men, and was about calling them from the field, when she saw the Indians approaching, and hiding herself in the woods and her child beneath her skirts, her eyes witnessed the destruction of her dinner and her home; and that night she made her way, with no attendant save her little son, to the nearest fort, several miles away. These invasions and perils put a stop to the further settlement of Springfield for some years. Most if not all the inhabitants fled away and remained till after the war, and peace and security were restored. Some returned, as the names of Young and Ferguson and Klumph in the immediate succeeding years are found on the town and church records. Before the war no church had been organized in the town, no sanctuary had been built. The few that were able and disposed to worship God, doubtless made their way to Cherry Valley, where the only church with preaching in the English language existed

within a distance of forty miles. The old log-house church of that village built thirty-five years previous was burned during the war, and the little band that worshipped therein disorganized. On the fifth of April, 1785, when the dispersed were returned and settled again in prospective peace and security, a public meeting of the citizens was held as appears by the record made at the time which I copy from the books of the Presbyterian Society. I do this more especially as I find among the electors the names of Springfield men, which shows conclusively that our fathers worshipped there before they were able to have a sanctuary of their own. It is as follows:—"We the *ancient* inhabitants of Cherry Valley in the County of Montgomery and State of New York, having returned from *exile* find ourselves destitute of our Church Officers, viz: Deacons and Elders. In consequence of our difficulties and other congregations in similar circumstances our Legislature thought proper to pass a law for the relief of these, viz. an act to incorporate all religious societies. passed April 5th, 1784. In compliance of said act, we proceeded as follows: "At a meeting of a respectable number of the old inhabitants of Cherry Valley, it was agreed upon, that an advertisement should be set up to give notice to all the former inhabitants that are returned to their respective habitations, to meet at the *meeting house yard*, on Tuesday the 5th day of April next at ten o'clock before noon, then and there to choose Trustees, who shall be a body corporate for the purpose of taking care of the temporalities of their respective Presbyterian Congregation agreeable to an act of the Legislature of the State of New York, passed April sixth, one thousand, seven hundred and eighty-four.

Samuel Clyde, Justice of the Peace.

CHERRY VALLEY, March 19th, 1785.

CHERRY VALLEY, April 5th, 1785.

1st, The Congregation being met agreeable to the above advertisement, proceeded as follows, viz: the congregation having no minister, nor elders, or deacons, at present by reason of death and removal of such in the late war, we, the people at large, did nominate and elect the following two members of the Congregation to be the returning officers and judges of the qualification of the Electors of said meeting.

COL. SAMUEL CAMPBELL. }
 WILLIAM DICKSON. }

2nd. Proceeded as follows at the said meeting and have nominated Col. Samuel Clyde, John Campbell Jr. and James Wilson to be the trustees for said Congregation. The trustees appointed James Cannon as clerk for said board.

CHERRY VALLEY, April 5th, 1785.

At a meeting of the inhabitants of Cherry Valley this day, the undermentioned were elected trustees for the Presbyterian Congregation.

SAMUEL CLYDE, Esq.,	}
JOHN CAMPBELL, JR.,	
JAMES WILSON.	

Among the twenty-one Electors' names at this meeting recorded, two at least are found that must have been inhabitants of Springfield (then a district of Cherry Valley,) viz. James Ferguson and John McKillip. The fact establishes the *religious character* of the settlers of Springfield at this early period, that in their lack of Christian ordinances and without a house of worship, they would make the tedious ride on horseback, over the hills and through the woods, to a neighboring settlement, in order to keep holy day with God's people. Within the next ten years many new settlers came into Springfield from New England and some ¹⁷⁹² Germans from the Mohawk.— Among them Benjamin Rathbun, Lieut. Nathaniel Sikes, Aaron and Bond Bigelow, Eliakim Sheldon, Ichabed Griggs, Moses Franklin, Capt. John Cotes, Abner Cook, Peabody Cook, four brothers by the name of Walratt, William Gilchrist, Henry Genter, William Hardy, Jedediah Beach from New Jersey, Robert Kelly, and his son James,—William Thompson. Most of whom with their wives were religious people. The names of many of their children and their children's children are recorded in the Church books of the different organizations of Christ's people in Springfield this day.

The First Christian Church gathered in this town was in the beginning of 1787 within three years after the return of the inhabitants. The account of its organization is found in the records of the Baptist Church as follows :

"There has been a work of grace in this wilderness and at a meeting of believers at the house of Nathaniel Dike, Jan'y 5th, 1787, it was voted to send to Mapleton for Elder Bentley, who came among us Jan'y 17, 1787 and baptised nine individuals as follows :

Andolph Walradt,
Nathaniel Dike,
Josiah Heth,
Juvenal Winter.

Elizabeth Walradt,
Esther Dike,
Hannah Heth,
Starlin Way

and Henry Stancel.

In October following, Elder William Farman paid the church a visit and soon thereafter became its minister and continued as such for a period of thirteen years.

I cannot learn by any light that has come to my knowledge, (and I have made diligent search) at what time the first sanctuary was built, but probably soon after the year 1787. It was a plain, unpretentious, moderate-sized building, painted yellow, without steeple or bell, built without doubt by voluntary subscriptions from the Christian citizens of the town; called "the Meeting House" and stood nearly in the middle of the old town burying ground in the middle village. Mr. Nicholas Genter remembers it as standing there at the the time his father first moved into the place in the year 1792, when he was but seven years old. Each Christian Denomination used it for religious services as they had need for a period of more than fifteen years. In it the Annual Town Meeting was held, from the incorporation of the town in 1787 until 1810. A vote was passed annually in town meeting of an appropriation of five dollars to some trusty man for the purpose of "keeping the Meeting House in clean and decent order for religious worship." Some of our older people remember it well, its rough floors, its square pews, without paint, without carpets, without stoves, yet worship as acceptable to God was rendered therein by as devout hearts as ascends from sanctuaries in these days of cushioned seats and tasteful adornings. Mrs. Kinney now in her 92d year distinctly recollects riding over from Stuart's Patent with a company of young people to attend the funeral services of Gen. Washington in January 1800. A Sermon was preached by Elder Farman and she says "the singing was beautiful." The Building was finally sold to Aaron Bigelow and converted into a dwelling house, the same as occupied by his son, the late Wm. L. Bigelow.

The precise date of the organization of this the First Presbyterian Church in this town is not known, as the earliest records

of the church and society are lost : yet without scarcely a doubt as early as the year 1796. In its infancy it was very feeble and unable to maintain a stated ministry. Occasional preachers ministered to it for a limited time. Missionaries from Connecticut visited the place, and were blessed in their labors. Chief among them was the Rev. Jedediah Bushnell, who spent several months, and negotiations were entered into for his stated employment. Widow Betsey Sikes Sheldon, now in her 87th year well remembers him, his being at her father's house, his preaching in the old Meeting House and in School Houses, and letters of correspondence with her father. From a report in the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine of the year 1801, from him to the Trustees of Connecticut Domestic Missionary Society, in whose employment he was, I quote a paragraph which is not only very interesting in itself, but establishes the fact of the existence of this church as early as the beginning of the year 1800. Reporting for the year 1800 of his missionary labors in Delhi, Stamford, Franklin, Worcester, Springfield, and Otsego Creek, to the Trustees of the Connecticut Missionary Society he writes: "About the middle of June a glorious work began in the town of Springfield, in the northern part of Otsego County. The means which God used at the beginning of the attention were a little singular. The small church in that place invited a clergyman to come and preach with them on the Sabbath, and administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. On Friday preceding the Sabbath, he preached the Preparatory Lecture. After the public exercises were closed, he requested the church to tarry, and examined them respecting their experimental and practical religion. They were so deficient in family prayer, in the education of their children, and in other Christian duties, that they were informed without reformation, he did not feel clear to administer to them the Lord's Supper. The church was solemnly moved, most of them were in tears, and before they left the house, confessed their sin and promised reformation. From that day the church arose from the dust and put on her beautiful garments, and the awakening immediately followed. It has by no means been general in this town; some people have been convicted, and hopefully converted, some others solemnized, but many have remained unmoved. Our places

of divine worship have been full, and usually attended with much decency, and sometimes with deep solemnity. Seventeen persons have publicly united with the church in this place since the commencement of the awakening, and a considerable number of others expect soon to make the same declaration of their faith in Christ." It is added, "twenty-six children have been baptized."

Thus it is clear this church was in existence prior to 1800, and in its infancy was nurtured by missionaries, and increased by the visitation of the Divine Spirit. Probably the church was formed several years before. It was now in a state quite removed, spiritually from a church at its organization. As evidence of an earlier origin, we find in the records of the Baptist Church under date of September 13th, 1798, the following entry: "Chose Deacon Bond Bigelow, Deacon Tenant and Bro. Benjamin Allen as a committee to meet a committee of the *Presbyterian order*, to agree on what part of the time each one shall occupy the meeting house." Also on the records of the Presbyterian Church of Cherry Valley, under date of January 4th, 1797, the following minute: "Met agreeable to a notification to consult whether the society will consent that Rev. Mr. Nott (their newly elected pastor) shall preach any part of the time in Springfield—Rev. Mr. Spaulding was voted chairman. A letter from the Trustees of Springfield addressed to the Trustees of Cherry Valley was read requesting the consent of this society, that Mr. Nott should preach at Springfield, not exceeding half the time in which a vote was taken whether the society would accept the proposals of Springfield society which was not carried in the affirmative. Voted that the Trustees be requested to return an answer to the people and Trustees of Springfield."

Meeting dissolved.

A TRUE COPY BY THE CLERK.

Thus we fix most satisfactorily the date of this church's organization, that was at least as early as 1796 and might have been a year or two earlier.

Springfield at this time was prospering with a sure and steady growth. Log houses were giving way and being exchanged for good and substantial framed dwellings. Stores and mechanic shops sprang into being as the people had need.

New roads were laid out, and school houses established. Farms improved under a more careful cultivation and many new families came in to enjoy a home in this region of quiet and picturesque loveliness. As early as 1803 the great western turnpike was laid through the place and finished a few years later, which gave a new impetus to business, invited more settlers—and caused an immense stream of emigration to flow through the place from the East on their way to find new homes in the richer lands at the West. About this time in the spring of 1806 the Rev Andrew Oliver a native of Scotland but recently from Pelham Mass., was introduced to this church as a candidate for settlement in the ministry, and was favorably received. A call was duly extended him and accepted and he was installed in the old meeting house, its first pastor, Oct. 14th, 1806. From this point for seventy years last past, there are faithful and authentic records by which we are enabled to trace all the way in which a gracious God has led this people. In the absence of records, however, hitherto, the uncertainty of tradition and the frailty of memory in those whose lives in the town reach back the farthest, it is impossible to determine with certainty the names of the seventeen added to the church during the revival in 1809, and still more those who were of the original few that helped to constitute the church at the beginning. Of one however there is no doubt, Dea. John Mc Killip, a Ruling Elder from the first, a period of well nigh forty years until his death in 1836, at the ripe old age of four score and seven. He was one such as Luke speaks of in his Acts of the Apostles “who seemed to be a pillar in the church.” In its days of weakness and trial he was firm as a rock upon the seashore against which the billows and storms dash in vain. The church on earth has always had its pillars, men around whom the people gather and on whom they are accustomed to lean. In almost every body of believers that can be found, we discover its efficiency, increase, and consequent prosperity traceable to the earnest, patient, untiring efforts of the few whom God by his grace has qualified to be pillars in his church. They are men of deep religious experience and strong practical faith and a uniformly consistent Christian life. Such a man, so far as the books show and the testimony of those who remember him,

was Dea. John Mc Killip. How often was he seen in his old age with stalwart frame and a head silvered with snowy locks and staff in hand making his way along the road or across the lots to the House of God or meetings of Session, or circle of prayer, or a visit to the sick more like an Apostle than other men. The good that such men do lives after them. When they die, not only the church but the world sustains a loss. As justice of the peace he persuaded multitudes that came to him for redress of grievances against their neighbors, to settle their difficulties between themselves without resort to suits at law. He was honored by the town as no man since has been, being elected its supervisor for twenty successive years. That he took part in the organization of this Church and was a ruling elder from the beginning there can be no doubt, and with him as an original member was Mrs. Fanny Young Mc Killip his goodly wife who survived him four years—Their remains lie side by side in the field immediately west of this church: and were it proper I would say here and now, their sepulchres deserve a regard and care that seem not to be cherished. With them may be added with good degree of certainty as members at the organization, Dea. John Young and Betsey his wife, Wm. Thompson and wife, James Young Esq., Robert Ferguson, Mrs. Jerusha Griggs, Dea. James Kelly and wife and Mrs. Gitty Van Vost. When Mr. Oliver was installed in 1806, this church had no house of its own as a place of worship, but feeling the growing necessities of the case and encouraged by its pastor it undertook the building of one the following Spring. The land where this building now stands was deeded to the trustees of the society by Major John Tennant and Dr. Little—A subscription paper was put in circulation and in Aug. 1807 eighty-five names attached to it with an aggregate subscription of \$1507.46. A building 50 by 45 was at once commenced but completed after many delays in June 1809, when the pews were sold at auction to the highest bidder. That edifice had its front toward the East, with a steeple 13ft. square and a tower 46 feet high.

In less than two months after Mr. Oliver's Installation, Dec. 2d, 1806, a Congregational Church was organized at the School House in the West Village, of twenty-four members, and commenced the erection of a House of Worship at nearly the same

time with the Presbyterians. It however was never fully completed by them. It stood on land near the residence of Mrs. A. A. C. Winsor, and was sold to the Baptist Society in 1813. The church had but one minister, the Rev. Mr. Williams who was installed by an Ecclesiastical Council, June 30th, 1807. He remained but a short period. In 1813, the church gave up its separate organization, and its members united with this congregation.

In the record of this Presbyterian society under date of July 15th, 1811, we find a singular minute indicating a regard for church behavior not always cherished, and a mode of punishing offenders not over terrible. It is as follows: "At a meeting of members of session, trustees and a number of members of the First Presbyterian Society at the meeting house, Robert Lothridge was appointed to return to the minister the names of all such young persons who behave unbecoming in the gallery during the time of public worship."

An event quite small in itself, yet indicative of great progress for the times, and helpful to religion, was the purchase of a church bell in 1816. This I am told was chiefly owing to the influence and exertions of Captain Ishi Parmele, late from Killingworth, Ct. For several years *the town* appropriated money by vote to have the church bells rang at 9 in the a. m. at 12 m. and at 9 in the evening. Before this, there was no church bell in our more pretentious, surrounding towns, nor in leed in all this region. Mr. Oliver's ministry continued near thirteen years: the church growing in strength and stability, and though no special seasons of revival were enjoyed, there were ninety-seven admitted to the church, during his ministry, fifty five of whom were on profession of their faith. He was a man sound in doctrine, and faithful in preaching, and by catachetical instructions to the youth, impressed truth as he had opportunity. Mr. Oliver had many warm friends, faithful to the last. He was honorably dismissed by Otsego Presbytery, in the year 1819, and continued to reside in town until his death, March 24, 1833, at the age of 71 years. His remains lie interred on yonder hill side in the family burying ground awaiting in hope the morning of the Resurrection. Oct. 18, 1819, a proposition was made by the trustees of this society to the trustees of the

society at Cherry Valley to engage the ministerial services of their pastor the Rev, Eli F. Cooley D. D. half the time but without success. The Lord was preparing for this people better things than their faith anticipated. The Rev. Aaron Putnam, a native of Pomfret, Conn., graduate of College, well read in Law and Theology, and a man of devout piety was directed hither and installed the second pastor to this church, March 14th, 1821. At the time of his coming, an unusual degree of religious interest existed, which wonderfully increased, and resulted in one of the most precious revivals with which the church has been blessed. God was evidently preparing the way for a work of grace. Its beginnings were manifest before Mr. Putnam came, originating under God in the spiritual preaching of occasional ministers who visited the place. A Rev. Mr. Waters was diligent to incite the church to prayer, by instituting prayer meetings in different neighborhoods, and worthy of mention, was the active piety of Mr. John Young, son of Deacon Young, then a student in Union College. Coming home from his studies in a vacation at a time of revival in the College, with a heart fresh and warm with the love of Christ and human souls, he was moved to converse with the young people on matters of the soul's value and its mighty salvation, and gather them in school houses and private dwellings as opportunity offered, for prayer and singing and exhortation ; many were moved by his example and influence to seriousness and care for the "one thing needful." This educated pious young man, afterwards studied for the ministry, intending to become a missionary, but was early cut down in the midst of a most promising prospect of Christian usefulness. He died in Vincennes, Indiana, August 15th, 1825, deeply lamented. Often are the greatest revivals in the Church of God traced to beginnings of his grace in some single soul, that soul becoming a leaven to bless an entire church and draw to salvation a multitude of souls, that otherwise seemingly would have perished. The "great revival of 1821," as it has been justly called in this local church, continued to spread through the entire years, and at three successive Communion Seasons, *one hundred and sixteen* were added to the church on profession of their faith. Sixty-two at one time stood up together in the old "centre aisle" to take upon themselves the vows of the Lord. Four names only

of that great number, after a lapse of fifty-five years now remain on the church's catalogue, viz: Miss Lucy Sikes, Rosetta J. Parmele, Albert Cotes and Hannah M. Sheldon. Nearly all have entered eternity, and are experiencing the fruits of that wisdom that inclined them to seek the Lord in "an accepted time, and in the day of salvation." The fruits of that memorable work of grace through all these years have been most marked in the spiritual interests of this church, and the morals of this community. Many very precious Christian lives have been spent here, examples of wisdom, patience, devotion and consistent piety: bringing down upon the church by their prayers and influence, blessings of harmony, stability and beneficence, and giving largely of their means to extend the gospel of God's dear Son to the ends of the earth. Four ruling Elders were among the number, and one ordained preacher of the gospel. Many others of them have passed their useful days in other places, valuable men and godly women that have strengthened and adorned God's heritage abroad. The whole blessed results of the work of grace enjoyed by this church in 1821, cannot be written nor told till its final effects are realized in the experiences of eternity. About this time the Sabbath School connected with this church had its origin, although two years before Miss Permelia Sheldon, the devoted daughter of Deacon Eliakim Sheldon, had gathered a local school, and taught it from the scriptures in the school house, a mile and a half south of this village on the Continental road. To her I am credibly informed belongs the honor of instituting and instructing the first Sabbath School in the town of Springfield. Yet after the great revival a new and broader impulse was given to this right hand enterprise of the church. The warm piety of the young converts led them to reach after and gather in the youth of the town. The conduct of the school was characterized by the greatest simplicity. There was no library, no Sabbath school literature, no hymns or music as now specially adapted to this form of worship: there were classes arranged, and teachers set over them for the reciting of verses with but little note or comment, and sometimes prizes were offered to the scholar correctly repeating the largest number of verses. It was the pioneer period of Sabbath schools in this country, and quite in contrast with

the Sabbath School of to-day with its numerous appliances and countless unappreciated privileges.

The health of Mr. Putnam failed him after three and a half years of faithful, assiduous labor. More than one hundred and twenty had been added to the church during his ministry. The catalogue now comprising more than two hundred names—He was dismissed in the summer of 1824, and afterward preached in Owego in this State where he died in July 1831 aged 41 years. Serious troubles and sore divisions afflicted the church about this period and many painful trials were endured, a relation of which, in my judgment would be productive of no good. The Lord watched over his flock and maintained his cause.

Rev. Edward Fairchild a graduate of Williams College, 1820, succeeded Mr. Putnam and continued as stated supply for the year 1825. He was a man of pure character and useful to the Church, labored afterward in various places in the ministry and died in 1852 *A.* 57.

Rev. James C. How, the 4th minister to this church, was ordained and installed by Otsego Presbytery Oct. 18, 1826. He ministered to the Church between four and five years and was honorably dismissed, again settled at St. George's in the State of Delaware and there died many years since. The years he spent in Springfield were years of peace, few were added to the fold, the church lost in numbers by death and removals, yet Mr. How accomplished good for Zion in other directions.

Rev. Oren Hyde, the 5th minister, more of a scholar than preacher, eminent in his knowledge of the Hebrew language, and afterwards a teacher in Fayetteville in this State, was installed pastor May 4th, 1831. His ministry was brief, being only one year. It was the memorable period in our American Zion when a very general interest in religion obtained through all the country, the period of "Four day's meetings" and protracted efforts for the salvation of souls. Pastors called for the aid of Evangelists and neighboring ministers to assist them in the preaching of the word. Among them Mr. Hyde invited Rev. Lumand Wilcox who became his successor and continued as stated supply for three years. This church in common with many others shared in the out-pourings of the Divine Spirit. More than one hundred individuals were during these three

years added to Christ's flock on profession of their faith. The church in the year 1834 had enrolled among its members two hundred and twenty four names, a larger number than at any time before or since. Mr. Wilcox in his preaching had the assistance of the neighboring clergymen, and for a limited time that of the Rev. Dr. Lansing of Utica. It was about this period the Methodist Episcopal Church in this village was built, and the Conference established a Charge.

In the year 1835 very general repairs were made on the old House of worship, the interior being entirely reconstructed, the ancient square pews giving way to slips and two aisles taking the place of three. The high backed pews in the gallery, that before had been a convenient and tempting place for youth to indulge in conduct unbecoming the house of God, were changed into long open slips, and the old uncouth steeple was lengthened to a far greater height.

The church has a very commendable history, touching its charitable contributions. They have been regular for above forty years, and very uniform and increasing in amount, chiefly in the interests of Foreign Missions, Home Missions, The American Bible Society and Ministerial Education. Other causes from time to time have received generous aid. Of what was contributed previous to the year 1831, I have no records near at hand to show, but the average contributions per year from 1831 to 1836, were \$196.07.

Average per year from 1851 to 1856	.....	\$333.42.
" " " " 1856 to 1861	.....	\$384.75.
" " " " 1861 to 1866	.....	\$771.50.
" " " " 1866 to 1871	.....	\$588.00.
" " " " 1871 to 1876	.....	\$659.25.

Rev. Mr. Wilcox closed his ministerial labors in the year 1835, preached in various places, and last in Thawville, Ill. where he died in 1873.

Rev. Richard Montgomery Davis, the seventh minister to this church, was a graduate of Union College and Auburn Theological Seminary, and was installed pastor July 29th, 1835. He was a man of strong and original powers of mind, independent in forming his opinions, fearless in proclaiming the truth, eccentric in many of his pulpit expressions and sometimes offended by his ingenious and abrupt utterances; yet a minister of devoted

piety, impressive as a preacher, and of great usefulness in many directions. His ministry continued five years during which fifty-five were added to the church, forty of whom on profession of their faith. He was called to preach in Bridgewater, Oneida Co., and there died of consumption, June 13th, 1842, A. 41 years. By his request, his remains were brought to Springfield for burial, and a marble tombstone marks the spot in the old grave-yard where they lie.

Rev. Samuel Moseley was the 8th, that ministered to this people, though but for a few months, in the year 1840. He was a young man fresh from the Seminary at New Haven, eminently studious, but of ill health, and consumptive tendencies. On leaving here he preached a few months at St. Vincent, but within a year retired to his friends in Hartford, Connecticut, and there died.

Rev. Solomon J. Tracy, a graduate of Williams College of the class of 1823 and Andover Theological Seminary, came by invitation to this people in April 1841, and continued as their stated supply thirteen and one half years, a longer period than any of his predecessors. During Mr. Tracy's ministry, the church edifice was somewhat remodelled, and for the first time *painted within*, aisles carpeted, slips reshaped and other minor alterations. The Sabbath School was more thoroughly officered, and in various ways magnified. A precious revival of religion was enjoyed, in which several of the young ladies in Mrs. Cotes Seminary became the hopeful subjects of Divine grace. The Seminary itself was a great blessing to Springfield while it continued, exerting not only an educational and elevating influence in the town, but under the Christian inspiration of its estimable founder and head, commending heavenly wisdom and purity of heart to every conscience within its reach. It was a calamity indeed that other claims and failing health should necessitate its suspension.

In the year 1854, April 1st, Deacon Benjamin Rathbun died, a convert in the revival of 1821—a Ruling Elder for nineteen years. Besides making noble bequests to the cause of Missions, he left to the society as a dying gift, and a pleasant memorial of his thoughtful generosity, the commodious parsonage and grounds as a permanent help to the church for all time to come.

In the Summer of 1854, the health of Mr. Tracy failed to that degree, that he felt constrained to seek release from the exhaustive labors of the ministry: though not without hope that he might resume them again, and in October resigned his pastoral charge. He still lives among us, respected and revered for his years and virtues, praying with, and for the prosperity of the church which he so long and faithfully served. Long may he yet live to favor us with his counsels, prayers and Christian example, as a minister of Jesus Christ.

Rev. Charles F. Beach came to this church in the beginning of 1855, and was installed during the year. He served the church two years. In 1857 he removed West, preached to several churches, and now resides in Louisville, Ky., as editor and proprietor of "the Kentucky Presbyterian." Rev. Daniel Van Valkenburgh, graduate of Union College and Auburn Seminary was called to this church as its stated pastor in April, 1857, and remained esteemed and beloved until his death, which occurred while in office Nov. 24, 1864. His remains were buried in Richfield. Mr. V. is remembered as a man of more than ordinary intellectual ability, whose sermons commanded the attention of the thoughtful and who never dismissed a Congregation uned. He delighted to discuss the knotty points in theology and make clear abstruse and difficult subjects. His was a logical mind, unimaginative and rarely dealing in figures and illustrations. The common hearer would call him dry and dull, while the dryness and dullness were more a part of themselves. In conversation he was reticent unless in company with his peers, but with them he was more than ordinarily genial and communicative. Few were converted during his ministry while all were enlightened and built up in truth and righteousness. The church at this time by death and removals, was reduced to about one hundred members, the lowest in point of numbers since 1820—but its stability and faith were never stronger. The original house of worship that had stood for fifty years, waxed old, and needed repairs. Decisive measures were adopted to take down the old building and construct a new, using as much of the old material as was sound and suitable, and changing the front of the sanctuary from East to North. The expenditure of three thousand five hundred dollars cheerfully subscribed and

paid, gave the society its present house of worship finished in 1857.

Rev. Samuel N. Robinson, graduate of Hamilton College, in the class of 1841, was called to serve this church in the spring of 1865, and remained as stated supply three years. The Lord was pleased to pour out of his Spirit upon the place in the spring of 1866, and seventeen professed subjection to its power, mostly among the youth, and made public their profession by uniting with the church. During Mr. R.'s ministry, the church sustained two serious losses in the death of Richard B. Sikes and Benjamin Jacobson, both ruling Elders, the former for thirty years, and the latter, for twenty-six years. It seemed at the time that the strong pillars were being removed, and that God was visiting his people in judgment. They were true and tried men, "of good report of them that were without," and loved and respected by all that were within, to whom God directed the attention of his people as worthy to be relied on in all those things pertaining to the upbuilding of Zion. Mr. Robinson left Springfield in the fall of 1868, and preached for sometime in North Walton, Delaware Co. At present he is ministering to the Presbyterian church in Sherman, Chautauque Co.

The present incumbent preached his first sermon in this pulpit, April 11, 1869, and left the next morning with no expectation of returning. A call was immediately made out and sent him by the trustees of the society offering a salary much larger than the Society had been accustomed to pay, and this was at once respectfully declined. A special messenger was then commissioned to visit him, and lay before him the earnest and unanimous wish of the society, that he become their minister, which compelled him to review his first decision, and visit Springfield again, which he did, preaching three Sabbaths in the month of May, and finally acceded to the wishes of the church and people. He commenced his labors as stated supply, June 27, 1869. During the seven years, the Lord has blessed the union with harmony and the united labors with a good degree of success. The congregation is somewhat enlarged, and the numbers attending the Sabbath School nearly doubled. Ninety have been added to the church, seventy four of the number on profession of their faith. The greater part of these,

became subjects of Grace in the winter of 1871 and 5, during a series of meetings, conducted by the Rev. O. Parker, since deceased, an aged and experienced revivalist. It should be mentioned to the honor of this church, but more to the honor of God's Grace that gave the church the means, and the disposition, to contribute a thousand dollars, as a memorial offering, that was bestowed in 1870 to swell the five million memorial fund raised by the United Presbyterian Church, in token of gratitude to God for the reunion of a once dismembered church. By the death of Miss Nancy Griswold, in March, 1874, the Society received a legacy of three hundred dollars, the interest of which, is to be applied annually in support of preaching. From the beginning, this church has had enrolled in its list of membership six hundred and nine names, the great majority of which, have been removed by death or dismissions. One hundred and thirty-five remain on its record to-day.

In these historical reminiscences of this Presbyterian church, special mention ought to be made of those members, that have served as Ruling Elders. During the period of eighty years of this church's existence, there have been twenty-three of them, and none of them unwisely chosen, none of them proving on trial unworthy of their office, or so faulty in any degree as to lose the confidence of the brethren and come under censure for crime or immorality. The mention of their names will stir very pleasant memories in many minds and incite those who now occupy that responsible position "to use their office well." I will name them in the order of their ordination:

John McKillip, Esq., John Young, Wm. Thompson.

The session at the organization.

George Oliver, 1808.
 James King, 1811.
 Eliakin Sheldon, 1814.
 James Kelley, 1814.
 Jedediah Beach, 1822.
 Benjamin Barnett, 1822.
 William Hamilton, 1822.
 James Whipple, 1830.
 Richard B. Sikes, 1835.
 Benjamin Rathbun, 1835.

Charles Fitch, 1835.
 Asahel S. Brown, 1835.
 Benjamin Jacobson, 1841.
 George Burnham, 1841.
 James R. Ferguson, 1859.
 Elisha W. Stannard, 1866.
 James E. Buell, 1866.
 James N. Durlay, 1875.
 Ephraim O. Beach, 1875.
 James Hood, 1875.

A goodly catalogue indeed, three of them serving more than thirty years, viz. Messrs. Mc Killip, Sikes and Burnham. Is there a church in the country that for eighty years can show a better record of its ruling Elders, for integrity, good judg-

ment, harmony in counsel and sympathy in co-operation for Christ's kingdom, soundness in the faith and elevated piety?

I may not conclude without asking in review of all the way in the which the Lord our God has led us these eighty years, what have we found? But before doing so I must here express my grateful obligations to those women, Misses Rosetta J. Parmele and Lucy Sikes whose personal memories by their long lives and connections with the church, supplying the defects of defective records, have greatly supplemented my labors in preparing this narrative. It has been no easy task while it has been a pleasant one to gather up facts touching the Religious history of the town. Help has been found in the records of the Baptist Church and the records of the neighboring Presbyterian Churches, the town records, the records of the Congregational Church [now extinct,] the *Comm. Evangelical Magazine* in which was found an account of the Missionaries who labored here. *Campbell's Annals of Tryon County*, and even from the grave stones of the dead. From these and other reliable sources there have been gleaned the facts **FIRST**, that this Church was early gathered long before it could build a sanctuary or support the stated ministry. **2NDLY**, that it owes much to Home Missions, being undoubtedly a child of the *Comm. Domestic Missionary Society*. **3RDLY**, we discover that the early settlers of the town whether from old Scotland and Ireland or emigrants from New England were a religious people and willing to make great sacrifices to enjoy gospel privileges. **4THLY**, this church has occasion to love and labor for revivals of religion. It might have died while yet an infant, yea indeed might never have been born had not God graciously poured out his Spirit when the Missionaries came hither from New England and through their labors the church was established, and in 1800, seventeen souls added to its membership. Then the memorable awakening in 1821 and the revivals of 1831-2 and 3; the pleasant showers of grace in 1852, 1866, and the larger revival of 1875—all have a lesson—the old gospel lesson, "Not by might nor by power nor by human effort, but by my spirit saith the Lord" is the Church of Christ quickened, nurtured and comforted on earth or sanctified and prepared for the bliss of heaven. And **5THLY**, this church has been

characterized by a uniform, stable and uninterrupted support of Public worship and the maintenance of the gospel ministry. Scarcely a year has intervened from the settlement of its first minister in 1806 to the present time without the stated ministrations of the gospel by an employed preacher and even in the brief periods when destitute of a minister, public worship has been maintained. Though the first ministers, and the first elders, and the first generation of members have nearly all died and passed to their long account, the Church still lives.

One family—we dwell in him ;
 One Church—above, beneath :
 Though now divided by the stream—
 The narrow stream of death.

One army of the living God,
 To his command we bow,
 Part of the host have crossed the flood,
 And part are crossing now."

Oliver has long since gone, and Putnam and Fairechild and Howe and Hyde and Wilcox and Davis and Moseley and Van Valkenbergh from the ministers, and from the Ruling Elders, Mc Killip, Young, Thompson, Oliver, King, Sheldon, Kelly, Beach, Barrett, Hamilton, Whipple, Sikes, Rathbun, Fitch, Brown, Jacobson and several hundred that in less conspicuous but quite as serviceable ways, prayed and struggled in all the experiences of private membership in this Church of God. They are gone—we still remain—we wait only a little longer—and shortly our work will be done. Yet whether we live or die God lives and the Church lives. He keeps all his promises. We have looked over to-day the history of Eighty years. We cannot look forward that reach of time.

It is certain that as another eighty years roll along, and reveal their events, our work and suffering will one by one have come to an end—the funerals will have been attended—the grave will have gathered our mortal bodies to its embrace, and our souls have been united with the unnumbered spirits that before us have passed into the mysteries of the unseen and eternal world. The Lord grant that we all may stand with the accepted of sinners from earth, redeemed and saved through our blessed Christ, and all the honor and glory, and thanksgiving shall be given to Him that sitteth upon the Throne and to the Lamb forever and ever. Amen.

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