

1784 -

-1934

**MILL CREEK
Presbyterian Church**

South Side

Of

Beaver County

Pennsylvania

BRIEF
HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF
MILL CREEK
CONGREGATION

(Read at the Sesque-Centennial Celebration)

August 19 to 26, 1934

By the Pastor
Rev. JAMES G. REED

On

HOME-COMING DAY
Wednesday, August 22nd.

WITH APPENDED PAPERS:

Chosen as
SESQUI-CENTENNIAL HYMN

Rev. Robert Freeman

“Braving the wilds all unexplored,
Dreamers of dreams and pioneers,
Wielding the sickle, goad and sword,
They marched with the sun to
Last frontiers-
God the valiant, grant that we,
Their sons, do follow valiantly!

Fair knights of justice and of good
They gave to evil battle gage;
Bearing their souls in rectitude,
They left a goodly heritage –
God of the righteous grant that we
Their sons, do follow righteously!

Guards of the scared altar flame,
Bringers of learning and of faith,
They lumined life in the blessed name –
And hope they flared in the day of death
God of the faithful, grant that we,
Their sons, do follow faithfully!

Theirs was the Presence ever sure,
Theirs was the all-abounding grace,
Theirs was the passion ever pure
To honor the Lord in all their ways –
God of the Christ-like, grant that we,
Do follow, follow worthily!”

-----The Hymnal – 1933

History of Mill Creek Church 1934

The first days of Mill Presbyterian Church are somewhat clouded in mist. It had its rise in pioneer days just following the Revolutionary War. These pioneers were too busy hewing out for themselves homes and farms from the heavily forested hills and valley, to have much time or interest in leaving written records of the history they were making.

At that time western Pennsylvania was the far West. It was quite a venture and involved many hardships and dangers for these immigrants to make their way over the mountains. There were no railroads then. Western Pennsylvania was largely settled by those of Scotch-Irish descent. Many came almost direct from the old country, more had come from the Eastern border of the land where they had settled for a time. Their venturesome spirit and the desire for cheaper land drove them Westward.

The Scotch Irish – Dr. W. F. Hamilton in the History of Washington Presbytery says of these Scotch-Irish – “Taken collectively they were of fervid temperament, quiet intellect, and ready speech, yet at the same time, of reflective habits, wary in judgment, and by no means lacking in self-control. It means also, that they had conspicuous energy and persistence of purpose and achievement, and were exceedingly firm, even obstinate, in their convictions, whether right or wrong; in a word, that they were excellent types of rugged impetuous strength of character. In respect of moral and religious character, it cannot, of course, be claimed that they were, without exception, ideal Christians. Many of them, like their descendants. Had more of Scotch-Irish vim than of divine grace, and there was much in the adversity of the times to temp them; it is to be noted that even when they failed in practical piety, they were apt to remain loyal to gospel truth, and form this cause not unfrequently, trained up a generation to follow them better than themselves; and furthermore, there were always among them not a few leading characters, who were eminently godly persons, and whose influence was sufficient to leaven, in a measure, the entire community, and thus give to it, as a whole, a distinctly exemplary character.”

Societies – These Scotch-Irish pioneers would naturally bring with them something of the religious habits that had prevailed in the Old Country. When organized churches ere not available they would gather into religious groups which they called “Societies”, where without leadership of a minister of the Gospel they would engage in social worship, the men taking turns in “going through.” This going through meant the singing of a Psalm, and usually each leader “started the tune” in his own turn, then a chapter of the Bible would be read, and prayer offered. It was the usual order of family worship, transferred to the more public social service. Two or three would take their turns in the same meeting. This would be devotional introduction to a thoughtful discussion on some Bible verse that had been announced at the previous meeting. Sometimes, at least, these societies were very close organizations. Dr. Henry W. Temple has a book with the constitution of one of these societies to which his grandfather

belonged. It was in the bounds of Westmoreland County. It carefully defined the high religious purpose of the organization, guarded against expression of heretical doctrine, and against acrid debate. No member of the society could bring another person to their meeting without the consent of the rest. He could propose the name of a friend or neighbor. The society would vote on his acceptability and if nobody blackballed him he was admitted. Thus the doors were almost as closely guarded as many of our secret organizations. Being Scots, they were wary of admitting anyone who would not uphold the religious societies, where so closely guarded as to their membership as this one or not, became the nuclei of churches later to be organized in the community. I have no doubt that preceding the time of Mill Creek's organization as a congregation there would be such a religious society, in which the godly people of the neighborhood would gather together for divine worship, many years before that April day in 1785 when a supplication for preaching supplies went up to the Presbytery of Redstone. Mr. Frank Reed says that he had heard his father say that he believed there had been gatherings of Christian people for worship in the Mill Creek Community for a considerable time before 1784, the accepted date of her beginning as a church. (Let me say here that I am greatly indebted to Mr. Frank Reed for much interesting information concerning the early days of Mill Creek. His father moved here in 1832, while the Rev. George Scott, the first pastor, was still in the pastorate. So that Frank and his father Samuel cover a period of now more than a century in their connection with Mill Creek.)

Redstone Presbytery – A brief paragraph in regard to Redstone Presbytery I think is in place in presenting the background of Mill Creek Church. Redstone was the first presbytery organized west of the Allegheny Mountains. It was not defined as to boundary or congregations – It included all territory west of the Allegheny Mountains, extending west into Virginia and Ohio as far as there were settlements. It was erected by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia on “ye 16th of May, 1781.” The ministers included in it were Reverends Joseph Smith, John McMillan, James Powers and Thaddeus Dodd. A minute of a meeting that was to have been held throws light on conditions that prevailed in those early days. Minute of Redstone Presbytery meeting at “Seweekly, Tuesday, ye 9th of April, 1872” – “A sufficient number of members not attending, by reason of the incursion of the savages, to form a presbytery, those who did meet agreed to appoint a meeting at Delap's Creek, the 3rd Tuesday of October.”

The Early Years – Thus the early years of Mill Creek Church were somewhat clouded. Bausman's History of Beaver County says, “This congregation is conceded to be the oldest of any denomination in Beaver County”. My friend Dr. J. O. Campbell, of Beaver now says that is not correct. He has found a minute of the Associate Presbytery in which another Mill Creek group, the beginning of the Service Church, asked for supplies in 1779, five years antedating the first known organization of Mill Creek Presbyterian Church. In that case it would be better to say that Mill Creek Presbyterian Church is the oldest living congregation in Beaver County. Priority of years are not of great importance. No minutes of session of this church have been preserved prior to 1806, so far as I have found. From that date the records have been preserved. Minutes of Redstone Presbytery show supplies assigned to Mill Creek from the year 1785. Rev.

Joseph Smith was the first, Rev. John McMillan the second. Messrs. Clark, Brice, Hughes, McReady and Patterson came as supplies in 1786.

Early Calls for Pastor – The United Congregations of Mill Creek and Kings Creek (now Florence) called Mr. John Brice on April 22nd, 1789. He accepted another call received at the same time.

The same churches called Mr. Robert Finley, April 21, 1790. Another call was accepted this time also.

Again these churches united in calling Mr. George Hill. He accepted another call. This was in April 1792.

They tried again in October of that year. This time calling Mr. William Swan, but he did not accept.

Changes of Presbytery - In 1793, Ohio Presbytery was organized, to include Monongahela River and North to Lake Erie. This included Mill creek. And while at it let us note other Presbyterian connections. In 1819 Washington Presbytery was organized, taking the southern portion of what had been Ohio Presbytery, and Erie Presbytery had been organized in the North portion, beginning with the north side of Beaver County.

Then in December 1908, Beaver Presbytery was organized, including all churches in the bounds of Beaver County, except where joint pastorates carried them over into other Presbyteries.

An interesting statement appears in the family history of “The Kerrs”, published in 1898, page 13 as follows: “Father McCurdy organized this church (Mill Creek) in 1786 and remained its pastor for ten years, retiring in 1796”. No McCurdy appears on the roll of Redstone or Washington Presbyteries, until Rev. Elisha McCurdy is ordained and installed pastor of Cross Roads (Florence) in 1800. Also this ten year period is marked by the sending of supplies by Presbytery and is the period in which the four unsuccessful calls were made. One wonders if there was a “Father McCurdy” who often preached in those early days in the absence of supplies. It is a case of need of further light.

Pastorate of Rev. G. M. Scott – After the last of the four unsuccessful calls in 1792, Mill Creek continued to receive supplies. The names of Rev. John McMillan, John Bruce and James Hughes appeared frequently in the assignments. In the summer of 1798, Rev. George Scott visited the congregation of Mill Creek and The Flatts (now Pughtown) and the next spring a call was sent to him which was presented to him by Ohio Presbytery at their meeting at Mount Pleasant in Aug. 27, 1799. The minute read: “The Rev. George Scott having accepted a call from the united congregations of Mill Creek and the Flatts appeared before presbytery and expressed a desire of being received as a member; upon his producing a certificate of his being a regular ordained minister of

the Presbytery of New Brunswick in good and full standing, also a dismissal and recommendation from that Presbytery to join the Presbytery of Ohio, he was accordingly received.” The elder from Mill Creek attending that meeting of presbytery was Alexander McCullough.

Thus being the first pastorate which continued for a full forty years, counting one year following his resignation in which he served as stated supply. The pastoral connection was severed in 1837. He continued to serve in preaching (when his health would permit), during the years of his retirement. He entered into his heavenly reward August 15, 1848, aged 88 years, 9 months. His dust lies in the old Mill Creek Cemetery just across the way. It was a long service, often arduous as he traveled the difficult roads over a large portion of the South Side of Beaver County and adjoining portions of West Virginia. He was an educator as well as a pastor. In his private school he had at one time three young men whose names became known over a wide circle. His own son, Dr. John Scott, became a minister and educator for fifty-six and one-half years, having taught in Washington College four years, in Miami University sixteen and one-half years, Oxford Female College ten years, and eight years in Hanover College. It was his daughter who graced the White House as the wife of President Benjamin Harrison. The second of this notable trio was Samuel Wallace, M. D., who practiced medicine in Hookstown, and, while fighting what was called the “Hookstown Fever” himself took it, and died when a young man. He was spoken of as a martyr to humanity. The third of this remarkable trio of students was Dr. William H. McGuffey, who later was author of the McGuffey readers which served a noted part in the education of youth. Rev. Scott had taught in Greensburg Academy at Darlington for a time and was a member of its board of trustees. His interests were broad.

Pastors of Mill Creek – In 1840, Rev. John B. McCoy became pastor. He served just one year. October 18, 1841, his life’s work ended. He was a grandson of Rev. Brice whom Mill Creek had called in 1789.

The third pastor was Rev. David Robinson who served from April, 1842, to October 1854. During his pastorate the congregation reached its second highest point in membership – 248.

Then came Rev. R. S. Morton in joint pastorate with Hookstown. This charge continued until he accepted a chaplaincy in the army in 1865. During this pastorate the first Sabbath School was organized.

Samuel Graham was pastor for one year, November 1865 to October 1866.

The sixth pastor was John L. Fulton, called from the United Presbyterian Church in Iowa in December 1868 and continued as pastor until 1875.

Then came David McFie from Scotland and labored as stated supply for one year 1873-1874 and Stephen A. Hunter from 1874 to 1875.

In 1875 William H. Hunter, brother of Stephen, became pastor. While he was pastor the present church building was erected. He built a church and married a wife in the congregation and remained an acceptable pastor. Either one of these is supposed to prove fatal to harmonious relationship, and to get away with both is indeed remarkable. This pastorate was a joint one with the then newly organized congregation at Mount Olivet.

Rev. James B. Lyle, who expects to be here to have part in the communion service next Sunday, came as pastor in 1888 and continued until 1890. While he was here the Mance was built.

After him came Brainerd T. Dewitt as shepherd from September 1891 to April 1893.

The tenth pastor was James R. Hosick who had charge from 1894 to 1904. His was an able leadership, marked by a large increase in membership. In 1902 Mill creek observed her one hundred and eighteenth anniversary and Rev. Hosick prepared a history which together with addresses then made were published in book form and are an important contribution to the knowledge we have of the Mill Creek Church.

Rev. W. R. Craig came to pastor in March 1906, and resigned to go to another field in June 1910, four years that left a pleasant memory for both pastor and people. He sent his regrets that he could not be here to share in this anniversary.

Rev. Matthew W. Smith was the twelfth pastor. He came in June 1911 and resigned in 1915 to enter the larger field when called to the pastorate of the Beaver Falls Church. One often hears glowing words of appreciation of his fine preaching and able leadership in music. It was especially during these last two pastorates that a strong movement from the country to the towns was marked by the number of dismissals to the valley churches. Though both had heartening increases in membership they also had to see those gains offset by losses of those who were attracted to the towns. That movement was not confined to just these years but as one reads the record of accessions and dismissals he is stuck with the evidence that such changes in the population were rapidly taking place.

After a period when Rev. Wheeland served as stated supply, Rev. Daniel C. Schnebly had a happy pastorate extending from 1917 to 1923. He saw the giving of the congregation mount to its peak in the prosperous years that followed the war. 1921 with its \$3,954.00 of total gifts, and 1923 with its \$4,008.00 were the banner years in the history of Mill Creek so far as large contributions go. They were years of plenty and may not have involved even as great sacrifices or as generous spirit, as the smaller gifts before and after that period.

Rev. Charles L. McCoy succeeded Mr. D. C. Schnebly for a short pastorate from 1925 to 1926.

Then Rev. Paul H. Hazlett, after supplying the pulpit as a student in the seminary, became pastor in May of 1927 and served until the fall of 1928.

In June 1930, the present pastorate began – the sixteenth in line.

Elders – I have tried to gather a full list of the names of those worthy men who have served as members of session during these years. I submit this in the hope that if I have omitted any I may have the names and the evidence of their service so that they may be added.

The first of these was Joseph McCready, Sr. who died in 1790. (See “Mill Creek Presbyterian Church 1784-1902” John M. Buchanan’s address, page 35, paragraph two, and on pages 34 and 35.) Mr. Buchanan expressed the opinion that it was he who attended the meeting of Redstone Presbytery and asked for supplies in 1785. George McCullough, Alexander McCullough, and David Kerr were elected before 1790. A few years later, but the date of the election is not known, John Thompson and James Ewing were elected and ordained.

John Harsha and Robert Ramsey entered the session in 1819. William Ewing, William McCullough and John Mitchell were ordained in 1827. Nathaniel Douglass and James Moody were elected in 1833. These were men who served with Dr. Scott in his long pastorate. Not all at once however. Some of them moved to the West. The Harshas went into the Associate Reformed Church.

Samuel Reed, Matthew Glass, James McKinley and Thomas Moore were called to serve in the session in 1848.

Ten years later, Robert G. Stewart, John T. Temple and Eli Ramsey were chosen.

Alexander Pugh, a long time clerk of session, was called to the eldership in 1870.

Robert G. Stewart and Samuel McHenry in 1873, and James McKinley II, Samuel M. Ramsay and Jesse Mercer in 1882 were added.

Hampton R. Massey, William S. Swearingen and James B. Buchanan in 1896, John R. Fleming in 1913, G. Frank Swearingen, John W. Glenn and Charles M. Massey in 1919 were elected and ordained.

The present bench of elders are William S. Swearingen, John R. Fleming, G. Frank Swearingen and Charles M. Massey.

Of these 38 men who have served in this important office, so vital to the spiritual life of a congregation many have been outstanding men of piety and capable leadership. I know of no exception to their worthiness. These have had a vital part in making Mill Creek Church a spiritual power in the community.

Marked Spiritual Movements – The special revival periods in Mill Creek’s history are deserving of our consideration.

The first of these which we have record came before any pastor had been secured, sometime between 1781 and 1787. Rev. Joseph Stevenson described it in a letter as “a most extraordinary work of Grace”. Just before the coming of Rev. Scott as pastor, in the closing year of the eighteenth century, came another time of spiritual refreshing when souls were added to the church. Dr. Scott ‘in his letter of review of his life’s work as recorded in the minute book of session’ wrote. “An awakened attention was excited in Mill Creek congregation before I came, under the preaching of the now Rev’d Thomas P. Hughes and in September about thirty more were added on examination.”

Closely following that came the remarkable visitation of God that began in this region in Florence under the preaching of Elisa McCurdy and soon found its way to Mill Creek and the Flats. It was known as the “bodily or the falling exercise.” Dr. Scott at first looked on it as an expression of overwrought emotions, due to the preaching of God’s judgments, and thought men’s hearts could be touched without these outward demonstrations, if the simple appeal of the gospel was set before them. But he found that he had no control over it whatever and became convinced that it was definitely the work of God. Dr. S. A. Kirkbride sent me a letter written by Dr. Scott to Col. William McFerran of Mt. Bethel, Northhampton County, dated Nov. 8, 1802, in which he describes this remarkable movement at length. This letter is preserved to us in the works of Thomas Paine, who presents it with a sneer at religion. I have appended this letter in full for those who may wish to read it. Let me bring to you here the closing paragraphs of the letter.

“On Thursday evening we had a lively society but not much falling down. On Saturday we all went to the Cross Roads Church and attended a sacrament. Here were perhaps about 4,000 people collected. The weather was uncomfortable, and on the Sabbath day it rained, and on Monday it snowed. We had thirteen ministers present, exercises began on Saturday, and continued on and on, night and day with little or no intermission. Great numbers fell, to speak within bounds there were upwards of 150 down at one time, and some of them continued rejoicing, while others were deeply distressed.

“The scene was wonderful; the cries of the distressed and the agonizing groans gave some faint representation of the awful cries and the bitter screams which will no doubt be expected from the damned in hell. But what is to me the most surprising, of those who have been subject among my people with whom I have conversed but three had any terrors of Hell during their exercise. The principal cry is – ‘O, how long have I rejected Christ; O, how often have I imbrued my hands in His precious blood! O, how often have I waded through His precious blood by stifling conviction! O, this dreadful hard heart! O, what a monster sin is! It was my sin that nailed Jesus to the cross’, etc.

“The preaching is various; some thunder the terrors of the law, others preach the mild invitation of the gospel. For my part, since the work began, I have confined myself

chiefly to the doctrines of our fallen state by nature, and the way of recovery through Christ; opening the way of salvation, showing how God can be just and yet the justifier of them that believe, and also the nature of true faith and repentance; pointing out the difference between true and false religion, and urging invitations of the gospel in the most engaging manner that I am master of, without any strokes of terror. The convictions and cries appear to be perhaps nearly equal under all these different modes of preaching; but it appears rather most when we preach on the fullness and the freeness of salvation.”

The immediate results of this stirring of men’s consciences was an addition of 36 members to the Mill Creek roll that year, and many others who came in later whose heart God had touched in this wonderful way.

In the year 1816, Dr. Scott preached “at a noted place called Muchmore’s Bottom on the Ohio River.” There a spiritual awakening began that spread to both the Flats and Mill Creek congregations, bringing an increase of 64 members to Mill Creek. From point of numbers a still greater movement came. Dr. Scott writes, “ In 1822 it pleased the Lord to visit both congregations with a remarkable and copious influence of His Spirit which continued to the year 1827; the fruits of which were an addition to the church of Mill Creek of 111 members – forty at one time – and it was noted that of thirteen young lads under 18 years of age, twelve afterward became ruling elders.

Then came the awakening of 1853 during Rev. David Robinson’s pastorate. It started under the preaching of Dr. Stockton and was continued about half time for three months. Revs. Pomeroy, Wells, Jennings, Green and Murray guided the services and preached. Elder Joseph McCready Jr. (lovingly known as Father McCready) was exceedingly active in leading souls to Christ. Tears often flowed down his cheeks as he plead with his hearers to yield their lives to Christ. AT the communion in March (note the time of year, roads were probably worse then than now) ninety-nine persons publicly took Christ to be their Saviour. It must have been a very impressive scene as they lined up in front of the church to take their solemn vows to be Christ’s own.

Less notable movements with fewer accessions continued in the carrying on of the work in later years. Sometimes the church grew, sometimes it lost ground in numbers, but in a remarkable way it held its own.

Members Enrolled – The first record of numbers is when Dr. Scott became pastor in 1799. There were sixty-six members. Near the close of his patorate in 1836 there were 224. There were large accessions but these were largely balanced by losses in the migrations westward and in the new churches that sprung up within the original bounds of Mill Creek. A high point in the membership was reached in 1854, when there were 248. The next year it had fallen to 183, but a new church had begun its life which took nearly half of the original church membership. The largest enrollment was in Rev. Hosick’s pastorate in 1902 when 260 were on the roll. That soon dropped to about 200. Of all the years of which I have the enrollment, 179 has been the average. That average may be considerably changed when a full available record of enrollment is listed. The present enrollment is 170.

Bethlehem – Frankfort – Hookstown – Mount Olivet

A Mother of Churches - We have given account of large additions to the churches numbers. It would be natural to wonder why the numbers of communicants was not much larger than it ever was. Dr. Scott accounts for it in his day thus, “The tide of emigration has been so great that numbers were annually dismissed to join other churches, and a new church has been formed in our former bounds which took off a wing of this congregation. This was written in 1836. The reference “no doubt” was to the organization of the Bethlehem church near Shippingport in 1830. This took off a wing of former Mill Creek bounds on the north side. About five years later, 1835, the church at Frankfort Springs took a like portion from the south end.

In 1854 just when membership began to mount following a fruitful revival, nearly one half of the membership withdrew to organize the Hookstown church, thus driving in the flank on the north side still farther.

In 1876 Mount Olivet Presbyterian Church was organized and members on the east side of Mill Creek border helped to swell the membership there. Under the pastorate of Wm. H. Hunter and James B. Lyle, Mount Olivet and Mill Creek congregations teamed together under one pastoral leadership. Other churches, such as E. Liverpool, Glasgow, Chester and to a lesser extent the Beaver and other Ohio Valley towns have benefited by withdrawals from Mill Creek. Thus, while Mill Creek has not grown mighty in numbers, she has contributed generously to the building of many other churches. During the anniversary week, we welcome back to Old Mill Creek, many of these friends who have gone from us, and at sometime had been a part of us.

Organizations – A few words regarding the organizations within the church which have been a great power for good in her life.

“THE SABBATH SCHOOL was first held in the log church prior to 1832.” (James B. Lyle in History of Washington Presbytery, page 302). There is no evidence that this early beginning was continued. But about 1859, during the pastorate of R. S. Morton, the Sabbath School began its work more definitely and has continued unto the present time. Frank Reed was a member of that first Sabbath School, seventy-five years ago.

The first superintendent was Elder James Moody who then lived on the present Fred Hobbs farm. Alexander Pugh, James McKinley, J. K. Buchanan, followed by Aaron Moore Buchanan, when quite a young man. These were grandfather and uncle of our present Moore Buchanan. Rev. Stitt, a teacher in Hookstown Academy – Frank Reed, Wm. S. Swearingen, Allen Robertson, Whittam Temple, Lee Snowden and the present Supt. Charles M. Massey.

THE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY was begun in 1878. Four charter members survive, Miss Nancy Montgomery, Miss Phoebe Beal, Mrs. Catherine Lutton and Miss Margaret McIntyre.

THE LADIES' AID was organized about 1916.

THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR SOCIETY has been a long established and fruitful organization. Its first members are now well advanced in years. More definite facts regarding it I do not now have at hand.

Ministers Given to Church – John Core a convert of 1802 and having experienced the “Falling Exercise” was the first. He is mentioned in Dr. Scott's Historical Review of his pastorate. Joseph S. Christmas, D. D., John W. Scott, D. D. LL. D., Samuel Moody; Robert Rutherford; Samuel McFerron; William Harsha; Captain Murray; Samuel N. Jeffrey; Robert Bunting, D. D.; Marion Moore, David Carson, D. D.; A. Bertram Allison; Harold J. Braden.

It would be interesting to note those who have gone into other professions and public service in other fields – Educators, Lawyers, Doctors, etc; But I leave that for others to search out.

Church Buildings – During these 150 years five different buildings have housed the Mill Creek worshippers. In the book “Old Redstone”, we are told that “the first meeting places, even in winter was out in the forests. A pulpit of logs and the people seated on logs conveniently arranged”. Mill Creek's first meeting house was a log structure, 18 x 20 feet. No one now knows when it was erected. It had neither doors nor windows. It was lighted from the roof. The entrance was by underground passage. These measures were taken for protection from the Indians, who still roamed the forests and sometimes they were in a killing mood. So worshippers came with loaded rifles to ward off attack. This building was located on the ground where the old cemetery now is.

The second building was much more pretentious. It was a double hewn log structure 30 x 60 feet in size, with alcoves of ten feet on each long side made necessary for the corner support of the logs, which for that size of building required two lengths. The pulpit was in one of these alcoves, an entrance door was in the other, and there was a door at each end of the building also. This was the building in use when Rev. Scott came as pastor. About twelve years later, for added comfort of the worshippers pews were added and stoves to furnish heat. Before this, in either building there had been no heating device. Many of the worshippers came long distances, 8 or 10 miles, in bitter cold often, and then remained for two long sermons. Yet no complaint of hardships has come down to us. This also was where the cemetery is now.

In 1832, a plain but commodious brick structure was erected. Its size indicated the growth of the church and audiences. Its dimensions were 50 x 60 feet. Its seating capacity was greatly increased by a gallery across the rear and along the sides. It was

erected on the present building site. Its life was shortened by the giving away of the foundations. It was in use for 37 years.

But the people had a heart to build again and on still larger scale, and more attractive form. In 1869, a large brick edifice, 48 x 70 feet, was erected at a cost of \$8,191. Unhappily its life was very short. Supposedly through faulty construction of the roof trusses, the walls spread and became unsafe and in 1882 it was torn down and the present frame structure was built on the same foundation material at a cost of \$4,000, size 38 x 70 with a seating capacity of about 400. Frank Reed's father had a part in the building of the last three churches.

We here close a very imperfect sketch of the only church in Beaver County that has lived and served for 150 years. It is a long time. Few organizations survive so long. At no time could it be called great in numbers, but it has rendered a great service to this community. It will continue to be a power for good as long as there are consecrated men and women who will give their best to build up its interests. Rejoice in the past. Set your hearts to help build the present and the future that still other generations will look back with glad memories of blessings received at Mill Creek Church. Each generation is responsible for those who now make up this church dedicate their lives to the service of the Saviour who loved us and gave Himself for us, and Mill creek will continue to live and bless this community.

I will close with the opening lines of a poem penned by Dr. J. W. Lockhart, St. John, Washington, when the report of the 1902 celebration had reached him. He is now 79 years of age and expressed regret that he could not be here.

What memories cling to thy old walls!
And hallowed thoughts within the sanctuary
Of my soul arise, when the sacred muse

Of Eros leads me to thy pleasant groves,
The crystal spring, its purling brook forever
Singing seraphic melodies in natures
Choir, while those tall majestic oaks,

Spreading their kindly arms in benediction
Of spirit-breathing incense to the green
Sward spreading at their feet! Thy very walls
Emblazoned with the soul-struggles of brave
True hearts that sought, amid the solitude
Of God's primieval temples, to erect

An altar, seemed to speak in subduing
Whispers – and still does speak across the gulf
Of time and space, to many a wanderers heart,

Of living deeds that burn their impress on
The hearts and lives of thoughtless wayward men.

Appended Papers

Transcript of family record of Rev'd. George M. Scott taken from the old pulpit Bible used by him during the latter part of his pastorate.

The Bible was published in Philadelphia in 1813

MARRIAGE –

Rev'd. George Scott was married to Anna Rea daughter of Samuel Rea Esq. Of Mount Bethel, May 17, 1798.

BIRTH –

Rev'd. George M. Scott was born in Buks (Bucks) county, State of Pennsylvania on, the 14th day of November, 1759.

Graduated at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia under the Presidency of Dr. John Ewing, June 1793.

Studied divinity under Dr. Smith of Princeton, N. J.

Licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, May 1797.

Ordained by the Presbytery of New Brunswick as an evangelist, November 7, 1798.

Received and accepted calls from the united congregations of Mill Creek and the Flats, July 1, 1799 – where he labored until the year 1826 when he resigned the charge of the Flats, devoting all his time to the congregation of Mill Creek until 1838 when at his own request Presbytery dissolved the union, in consequence of infirmity; after which he labored one year as a stated supply, thus having preached the gospel forty years in this place, and afterwards throughout the bounds of the Presbytery of Washington and elsewhere as health permitted until called away by death on the 15th of August, 1848.

DEATH –

Rev'd. George M. Scott, died August 15th., 1848, aged 88 years, 9 months and 1 day.

Mill Creek Church

A Retrospection

By J. W. Lockhart

What Memories cling to thy old walls!
And hallowed thoughts within the sanctuary
Of my soul arise, when the sacred muse
Of Aros leads me to thy pleasant groves.

The crystal spring, its purling brook forever
Singing seraphic melodies in Nature's
Choir, while those tall, majestic oaks,
Spreading their kindly arms in benedictions
Of spirit-breathing incense to the green
Sward spreading at their feet! Thy very walls
Emblazoned with the soul-struggles of brave,
True hearts that sought, amid the solitude
Of God's Primeval temples, to erect.
An altar, seemed to speak in subduing
Whispers – and still does speak across the gulf
Of time and space, to many a wonderer's heart,
Of holy love and trusting faith portrayed
In living deeds that burn their impress on
The hearts and lives of thoughtless, wayward men.

Old Walls! I love each stone and brick, and feign
Would sing their praise in songs that rise
To the fair dome of yonder vaulted skies.
The pulse grows still, and memory backward
Glides, closer and closer to those old walls
Whose portals seemed an entrance into heaven,
Their altars, a communion place with God;
While o'er each pew inspired silence poised,
As if to pour a blessing on each head
So humbly bowed in reverential prayer.
Reverence seemed to permeate the air
And breathe a holy stillness on the desk,
The altars and the pews. Ah! God was there,
And blessed us with a sorrow for our sins –
Then filled the cup of Truth, Hope and faith,
Full rounding to the brim – and filled our souls
With joy, that all pervading, quiet joy,
That speaks from heart to heart of love to God
And peace on earth, good will to men.

'Twas there that Fulton held his gentle sway,
And even taught the children how to pray.
His frame was large; his heart and mind and soul
In ratio to his fine physique; his eye
Bespoke a sacrificial zeal for that
His soul espoused; his smile, a soul-born smile,
Spoke to the inner self, subjective mind.
In sweet trachaic measures yet untuned
By earthly muse or patriarchal bard.
Other have come and gone, and mayhap eclipsed

The honors of that sainted many, but in
The shrine of Mill Creek Church his name
Must ever be revered.

The faces in the pews are passing in
Review, and nod and smile as if they would
Beguile my heart to join the glad refrain,
In jubilees of song, and praise that rise
Through the vaulted dome to join the Cathedral
Chimes of heaven – eternal symphonies.
The choir stands – grand anthems roll, in wave
On wave, across each soul – each face I know,
Each voice I hear – Nearer my God to Thee.

In yonder chancel is my class of boys;
Bright boys they are, and none with hearts more true
They greet me with a pleasant smile that fills
My heart, and lifts the burden of my task
From off the lap of brooding Fear into
The outstretched arm of living faith serene.
The shoes must fall from off thy feet, for this
Is holy ground. The psychic field of youth,
The perfumed June of life, must be for aye,
The garden of the world's heroic deeds –
To pure sacrifice that helps humanity,
And balms the wounds that bleed

Do I but dream! Are those old walls not there!
Has Time in his alchemic urns dissolved
The brick and stone, and wrote the epitah
Of those bright days on newer monuments?
Let it be so. 'Twas consecrated faith
That built the first, all others, and the last.

Faint praise I bring. My lethargic muse
O'er fed with dainty scraps of retrospection,
Garnished with the heart's desire, cannot touch
The golden chords of Faith's enjeweled harp;
Nor sing, in melodies divine, the meed
Of praise that should be thine. But this I know
- Good works, true thoughts, can never die. They
Live and bloom and shed their rich perfume along
The cold and barren wastes of life. On plains
And mountain peaks they are a guiding star,
That leads the exiled heart "to pastures green,
And quiet waters by." The prodigals, in thought,

Return to thee and oft implore thy benedictions.

**Preface to the Minutes of Mill Creek Session
Beginning August 4, 1834. This preface is dated
March 22, 1836. About one year before
Dr. Scott's resignation.**

Mill Creek was first formed into a religious society sometime between A. D. 1785 and 1786, in troublous times, when they were few in number, and when they were obliged to carry arms to the house of God for defense from a savage foe. They, however, received annual addition from immigration till at length being united to the congregation of the Flatts I visited them in the summer of 1798. In the spring of 1799 these two congregations united sent a call to me through the Presbytery of New Brunswick, (of which I was a member). I accepted their call, and arrived to take charge in July following. An awakened attention was excited in Mill Creek congregation before I came under the preaching of the now Rev'd. Thomas P. Hughes, and in September about 30 were added on examination. Mill Creek church then consisted, perhaps of about 66 members. In the year 1800, 15 more were added on examination. In 1802 the remarkable revival, commonly known by the appellation of the "falling, or bodily exercise," commenced; and between this and the year 1805, 26 were added, 10 of whom were subjects of the bodily agitation, most of whom are still living as consistent Christians – one is now preaching the Gospel, (The Rev'd. John Gore), and the rest died with a comfortable hope.

At that time a great number were exercised in the same manner, a majority of whom have since united themselves to the church at different times; but the greatest care was taken by the officers of the church not to admit any to the communion till they gave such evidence as induced us to hope that they had passed from death unto life. From this time we had annual admissions from 2 to 10 members. In the year 1816, by invitation I preached in a destitute corner of Virginia bordering on the Flatts congregation, at a noted place called Muchmore's Bottom, on the Ohio River, when it pleased the Lord to accompany his word, and an awakening commenced which spread through both congregations, the fruits of which gave an addition to Mill Creek of 64 on examination, and to the Flatts of 41. In 1822 it pleased the Lord to visit both congregations with a remarkable and copious influence of his spirit which continued to the year 1827; the fruits of which were an addition to the church of Mill Creek of 111 members, and about as many, perhaps, in the Flatts. Since that a few have been admitted annually. The number now in communion in Mill Creek is 224.

Considering the many additions we have had, it might be expected that the number of communicants would be much more numerous; but the tide of emigration has been so great that numbers were annually dismissed to join other churches, and a new

church has been formed in our former bounds which took off a wing of this congregation. (The reference, evidently is to the organization of Bethlehem in 1830.)

Although we have to lament our present coldness and deadness, yet we trust that the Lord hath not forsaken us. We still have a few additions at almost every communion. There is a praying few who frequently meet for social worship. In general, there is good attention paid to the public ordinances of the house of God; and by spirited excitations we now have a good brick house built for the worship of God. A temperance society was formed in this congregation, which is now changed to a township Temperance society containing about 130 members, whose efforts God hath countenanced and blessed. A great moral reformation has taken place – the use of ardent spirits is greatly done away – the numerous distilleries are so broken up, that there is not one single one in all our bounds, and all our stores are on the temperance plan. In short, the Lord hath indeed done great things for us whereof we are glad, and to Him be the glory.

March 22, 1836

Signed, GEORGE M. SCOTT

From “Complete Works of Thomas Paine,” Volume 1, Page 289. Letter written to Col. Wm. McFarran of Mt. Bethel, Northhampton County, Pa. By Rev. George M. Scott of Mill Creek, of Washington County, (now Beaver County) and dated November 3, 1802.

My dear Friend,

We have wonderful times here. God has been pleased to visit this barren corner with abundance of His grace. The work began in a neighboring congregation, at a sacramental occasion, about the last of September. It did not make its appearance in my congregation till the first Tuesday of October. After society in the night there appeared an evident stir afterwards. On Saturday evening following we had society but it was dull throughout. On Sabbath day one cried out but nothing else extraordinary appeared. That evening I went part of the way to the Raccoon congregation where sacrament of the supper was administered; but on Monday morning a very strong impression of duty constrained me to return to my congregation in the Flatts where work was begun.

We met in the afternoon at the meeting house where we had a warm society. In the evening we removed to a neighboring house, where we continued in society till midnight; numbers were falling all the time of society. After the people were dismissed a considerable number staid and sung hymns till perhaps two o’clock in the morning when work began to the astonishment of all. Only five or six were left able to take care of the rest, to the number of near forty. They fell in all directions, on benches, on beds, and on the floor. Next morning the people began to flock in from all quarters. One girl came early in the morning but did not get within one hundred yards of the house before she fell powerless and was carried in. We could not leave the house and therefore continued society all that day and all that night, and on Wednesday morning I was obliged to leave a number of them on the spot.

On Thursday evening we met again, when the work was amazing; about twenty persons lay to all appearance dead for nearly two and a half hours, and a great number cried out with sore distress. Friday I preached at Mill Creek. Here nothing appeared more than an unusual solemnity. That evening we had society where great numbers were brought under conviction, but none fell. On Monday I went to attend presbytery, but returned on Thursday evening to the Flatts, where society was appointed, when numbers were struck down. On Saturday evening we had society, and a very solemn time, - about a dozen persons lay dead three and a half hours by the watch. On Sabbath a number fell, and we were obliged to continue all night in society, as we had done every evening we had met before. On Monday a Rev. Thomas E. Hughes, pastor of Mt. Pleasant Church, Darlington preached at Mill creek, but nothing appeared, only a great deal of falling.

We concluded to divide that evening into two societies in order to accommodate the people. Mr. Hughes attended the one and I the other. Nothing strange appeared where Mr. Hughes attended; but where I attended God was present in the most wonderful manner. I believe there was not one present but was more or less affected. A considerable number fell powerless, and two or three, after laying some time, recovered with joy and spoke near half an hour. One especially declared in a surprising manner the wonderful view she had of the person, character and offices of Christ, with such accuracy of language that I was astonished to hear it. Surely this must be the work of God.

On Thursday evening we had a lively society but not much falling down. On Saturday we all went to the Cross Roads church and attended a sacrament. Here were perhaps about 4,000 people collected. The weather was uncomfortable; and on the Sabbath day it rained and on Monday it snowed. We had thirteen ministers present. The exercises began on Saturday, and continued on night and day with little or no intermission. Great numbers fell; to speak within bounds there were upwards of 150 down at one time, and some of them continued three or four hours with but little appearance of life. Numbers came to rejoicing while others were deeply distressed.

The scene was wonderful; the cries of the distressed and the agonizing groans gave some faint representation of the awful cries and the bitter screams which will no doubt be extorted from the damned in hell. But what is to me the most surprising, of those who have been subjects among my people with whom I have conversed but three had any terrors of hell during their exercise. The principle cry is: 'O how long have I rejected Christ! O how often have I imbrued my hands in His precious blood! O how often have I waded through his precious blood by stifling convictions! O this dreadful hard heart! O what a dreadful monster sin us! It was my sin that nailed Jesus on the cross,' etc.

The preaching is various; some thunder the terrors of the law, others preach the mild invitation of the gospel. For my part, since the work began, I have confined myself chiefly to the doctrines of our fallen state by nature, and the way of recovery through Christ; opening the way of salvation; showing how God can be just and yet the justifier of them that believe, and also the nature of true faith and repentance; pointing out the

difference between true and false religion, and urging the invitations of the gospel in the most engaging manner that I am master of, without any strokes of terror. The convictions and cries appear to be perhaps nearly equal under all these different mode of preaching; but it appears rather most when we preach on the fullness and the freeness of salvation.

(This booklet has been uploaded to Genealogy Pit Stop with permission and was contributed by David Ash.)