

# The 250th Anniversary of Middle Octorara United Presbyterian Church

by Hiram G. Troop, Sr.

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Mr. Madison E. McElwain's *Faith and Works at Middle Octorara Since 1727* was published in 1956, and there is a copy in the LCHS collection. "The 250th Anniversary of Middle Octorara United Presbyterian Church" is intended to serve as an update of Mr. McElwain's work. It is part of my work as a member of the Bicentennial and 250th Anniversary Committee of Middle Octorara United Presbyterian Church.

A few of you will remember our 200th anniversary in 1927. Many more will wish to know something about it. If so, look on pages 418-426 of *Faith and Works* (Madison McElwain) and you will be thrilled with the response of our congregation.

Many will remember our 225th anniversary in 1952. It can be found in the same book, pages 426-447. Many of you took part in the pageant's twelve parts. You will be interested in finding what part you had. The author of this paper really enjoyed reading about these anniversaries, and you will also enjoy them.

Now we are in the midst of our 250th anniversary (1727-1977). Almost all of those who took part in the 200th anniversary and many who took part in the 225th have passed on to Glory. We miss them for we have not forgotten their works. It is up to us to continue the work for our Lord Jesus.

God has been good to us as individuals and as a church during these last 25 years. Life has gone on as it did in the other 25 year spans. I know we felt sad when loved ones passed on to their reward. But joy also came with the birth of many babies who through the years have grown up with the church and have given their lives to the service of God.

I wish we had space to name and to talk about the great numbers, both men and women, who were pillars of the church and who have gone to their Father in Heaven during the past 25 years. It would not be fair to name some and not others. You can recall many that you have know.

But there is one who was the friend, counselor and leader of our flock, always there when needed in times of trouble or joy. He served us for 50 years as our pastor and friend. His life and works can be found on pages 110-117 of *Faith and Works*. You know now that I am talking about our beloved pastor, Rev. George H. Shea, D.D. In 1964 and 1965, three special services were held in commemoration of these 50 years.

On November 1, 1914, Rev. Shea came to supply the pulpit which had become vacant upon the retirement of Rev. Cairnes. He chose as his text Micah 6: 8—“He hath shown thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” On Nov. 1, 1964, Dr. Shea preached from this same text to open the 50th anniversary of his Ministry.

On Dec. 1, 1914, Rev. Shea was called to be the pastor of our church. On Dec. 1, 1964, in the evening this event was commemorated with visiting ministers and friends participating.

Rev. Shea was installed on Jan. 28, 1915. This event was observed on Jan. 28, 1965, in the evening with the Presbytery of Donegal and the Synod of Pennsylvania bringing greetings.

The Good Lord blessed him in many ways. On Sept. 6, 1965, God decided to take him to his home in Glory, and it was time for another to take his mantle.

Rev. Richard Dunham of Chestnut Level became the Moderator of Middle Octorara. Under his wonderful guidance the following committee took up the task of selecting one who should take up this mantle.

Hiram G. Troop  
Mildred Rhoads  
Richard Krantz  
Ernest Reynolds

Mary Myers  
Ruth Rice  
Janet Landis  
Ray Eby

The committee traveled near and far to visit churches and to hear ministers. After six months of earnestly seeking God's help the committee chose Rev. Robert W. Tanguy, who was the Minister at Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania.

Rev. Tanguy was born at Greenville, Pennsylvania on December 5, 1926, a son of Clair D. and Lillie May Baker Tanguy. He was one of seven children, three boys and four girls.

He attended Penn High School, received his B.A. from Westminster College at New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, in 1951, and his Master of Divinity from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in 1954.

He married Rose E. Rearick, who was born on April 15, 1931, the daughter of J. Harold and Huldah Rearick of Harrisburg. She attended the Reading High School and then went to Westminster, graduating in 1954. Speech and Drama were her special subjects. The Tanguys' have been blessed with four children: Debra Anne (Mrs. William J. Martz), Nanci Christine (Mrs. Richard L. Caskey), Robert Douglas, and Wallace Scott.

Before coming to Middle Octorara Rev. Tanguy served at Harrisville and Uniontown, Ohio, from 1954 to 1956; Glenmoor Church, East Liverpool, Ohio, from 1956 to 1961; and Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania, from 1961 to 1966.

Rev. Tanguy preached his first sermon at Middle Octorara in March of 1966 and became our pastor on June 15, 1966, with installation service on June 26, 1966.

Since then he has served as Counselor for nine years at Camp Donegal, has been chairman of the Ecclesiastical Responsibilities Committee of Donegal Presbytery, chairman of the Pensions Sub-Committee of the Ministerial Relations Committee of Presbytery, and he has been a member of the General Council of Presbytery.

Rev. Tanguy can trace his ancestors back to John Paxton, one of the early members of Middle Octorara, who was his maternal great-great-great-great-uncle. John Paxton's life work for the church can be found on page 146 of *Faith and Works*. It is well worth reading.

In April of 1970 construction started on an addition to the educational building. This project was undertaken after a committee appointed by the Congregation reported a need for more classrooms and for lavatory facilities on the first floor. The total cost of the project was \$34,696.73, and the new addition was dedicated on March 15, 1971.

Since our 225th Anniversary, the Lord has called home two Sons of the Church:

Rev. William McElwain and Rev. Charles Best.

During the past 25 years two members have been called to serve the church in special ways. Elder Hiram G. Troop, with his wife Luetta K. Troop, attended the General Assembly at Boston in 1966. It was at this assembly that the debate on "The Confession of '67" took place. Elder Martha Landis served as a delegate to Synod in 1973.

These were great Christian experiences. If you should be called to this work of God and The Church, never turn this opportunity down.

May the Grace of God be with us as a congregation and bless us in the future as he has in the past and may we be worthy of these blessings.

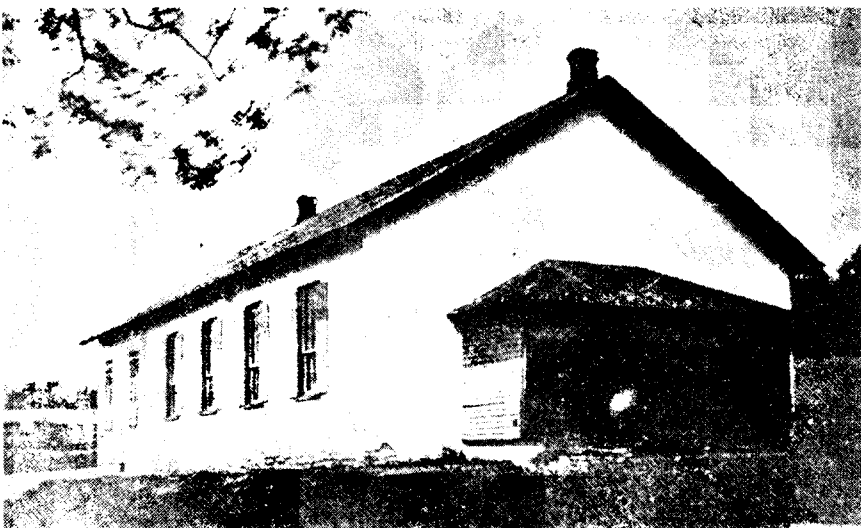
It is up to each one of us to be faithful to our God, our Church, and our Country.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hiram G. Troop, Sr. was born in Gap, Pennsylvania, on December 25, 1897. He graduated from Paradise High School and Millersville Normal School (class of 1918). In 1919 he was elected principal of Bart High School which was then located in the west end of the Shrine (Octorara Covenant) Church across the road from Middle Octorara. This was his first contact with the church he came to love so much.

Mr. Troop has served his church well as a Ruling Elder and in many other capacities. He taught school and farmed for fifty years, and he and his wife still live on the farm near Mount Pleasant where they have lived for the past 47 years.

Mr. Troop has become an institution in his community having taught hundreds of its residents somewhere along the line. Through his selfless giving he has earned the love and respect of the many who have been guided by his hand. He is married to the former Luetta Keene and the couple has six children, twenty grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.



The Octorara United Presbyterian Church (Covenant Church) as it appeared when Mr. Troop taught at Bart High School. The frame addition on the left side of the building is where the high school classes met.