

HISTORY OF CEDAR GROVE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN EAST EARL TOWNSHIP

By Hon. A. G. Seyfert

In the midst of the monuments and tombstones in the cemetery around the Pequea Presbyterian Church down in Salisbury Township, stands a gigantic White Oak tree. Between the church and the Session House is a Black Walnut, not as large as the Oak but just as old.

These remaining monarchs of the wilderness, were land-marks in the forest two hundred years ago, when the Pequea Presbyterian Church was founded in 1724.

From a historical viewpoint the Oak and Walnut are intensely interesting to me.

Under the Oak, the Rev. Adam Boyd preached his first sermon on a summer day in 1724. Within the shadow of its branches the first log church was erected the same year. Beneath the aisle in front of the pulpit the remains of Rev. Adam Boyd were buried and are now protected by the shade of the Oak that sheltered him from the rays of the sun two centuries ago, when as a young preacher he proclaimed the gospel of glad tidings to the pioneers of the Pequea Valley.

The Black Walnut is venerated by the Congregation ever since they built a platform around it from which the Rev. George Whitfield, the eloquent English missionary preached to many thousands about the year 1740. Like everywhere else he preached, his sermons powerfully stirred the people. One writer of the time left this record: "On the way to and from service, it was not an unusual sight to see groups of anxious inquirers holding prayer meetings by the wayside, and asking one another the way of salvation."

These mute sentinels of the dead and the living are witnesses of the past with all its sacredness of two hundred years of Church history. In a few weeks from now when thousands will gather there to celebrate the second Centennial of the Church, these silent living giants will shade them from the burning rays of a September sun the same as they did two hundred years ago those who are now asleep in their graves at the roots of these venerable monarchs of the original forest that covered this part of the State.

Behind every historical event there is a cause that leads to another that only ends at the beginning of time when facts were first recorded.

The story of Old Pequea and its Presbyterian history is as charming as a romance and I am almost persuaded to write of the Mother Church instead of the Daughter, Cedar Grove.

A little more than two hundred years ago the Pequea and Conestoga Valleys were a howling wilderness. No human food trod upon its soil but the Indian.

When the persecuted and friendless Europeans came from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Holland, Switzerland, France and Germany to transform the wilderness to a fit place for the white man to live, each nationality brought with it the refined and the learned with the word of God in their hearts to seek an asylum in the new world from the intolerable religious persecution of the old.

From that period onward, the wild forest gradually became transformed into the abode of civilized man.

In 1730 a company from Wales founded the parish at Bangor and organized the Church of England, now the Episcopal Church of Churchtown. The

same year a number of emigrants from Germany organized the Lutheran Church at New Holland. In 1766 the Mennonites established their church at Weaverland. Among the emigrants were many from Ireland and Scotland whose early Presbyterian faith was such that they would never identify themselves with any other sect but their own.

The Pequea Presbyterian Church having been in existence for six years prior to any church in the Conestoga Valley, the Presbyterians north of the Welsh Mountains rode across the mountain on horse back to worship at Pequea.

Rev. Adam Boyd was born in the county Antrim, Ireland, and came to New England in 1722, where he received theological instructions from the celebrated Cotton Mather, who gave him a certificate of good character dated June 10, 1724. Mr. Boyd, in the meantime, had learned that Rev. Mr. Craighead, a pioneer Irish Presbyterian, had emigrated to Pennsylvania. Mr. Boyd, having formed an attachment for a daughter of Mr. Craighead, instead of returning to Ireland followed the Craighead family to Penn's settlement. He presented his credentials from Cotton Mather to the Presbytery at New Castle on July 29, 1724, and on the same day became a member of that Presbytery and was sent to supply at Octorara, with a special injunction to collect a congregation at Pequea and organize a Presbyterian Church there. Octorara liked his preaching so well that at the next meeting of Presbytery, September 14, 1724, a call was presented for his services as a pastor, by Cornelius Rowan and Arthur Park, representatives of the people of Octorara and "Pickqua." This makes the Octorara church the Mother church of Pequea and the Grandmother of Cedar Grove.

On one of the memorial windows in the Pequea church you will find the following inscription:

In memory of
Rev. Adam Boyd
First pastor of this Church
1724 to 1733.

I want to add that Rev. Mr. Boyd married the daughter of Rev. Thomas Craighead, who became his successor at Pequea in 1733. Mr. Boyd preached for the congregation of Upper Octorara to the time of his death, November 23, 1768, or 44 years.

Rev. Thomas Craighead was the pastor of Pequea until June, 1739, when he died. He was followed by Rev. David Alexander who remained until 1749, when his labors ended with his life. It was during his ministry that the great Whitfield preached his wonderful sermons under the Walnut tree.

In 1737 Leacock presented a petition to erect a house of worship for themselves. The Presbytery granted this request and the church was organized in 1741, but supplied by the same pastor who preached at Pequea.

On October 9, 1750, Pequea and Leacock united in a call for Rev. Robert Smith, who accepted and was installed March 25, 1751.

Mr. Smith was born in Londonderry, Ireland, in 1723 and came with his parents in boyhood to America and settled at the head of the Brandywine. I have no apology for the space I devote to him in this sketch, for it is my honest opinion that he was one of the greatest characters that, from an educational and religious view, America produced during the Eighteenth Century.

At the age of fifteen he was converted under the preaching of Whitfield on his first visit to America. He studied with Rev. Samuel Blair at Faggs Manor. In his Bible he made the following entries:

"December 27, 1749—I was licensed to preach the Gospel by the New Castle Presbytery."

"May 22, 1750—I was married to Miss Betsy Blair" a daughter of his teacher.

"October 9, 1750—I accepted a call from Pequea and Leacock." The only one he ever accepted but it continued for forty-two years to the end of his life in 1793. His death was rather tragic. He had been attending a meeting of Trustees of Princeton College of which he was a member. He was taken ill on the road near Rockville, Chester County, where he remained over night. The next morning being Sunday, he was determined to proceed on his way to Pequea to preach.

As the congregation of Brandywine was assembling for worship they found him lying on the road-side, his faithful horse standing beside him. He was removed to the house of William Hunter, where he died two days later, April 15, 1793. His remains were taken to his home and buried near the church under the shade of the White Oak. Over his grave on a plain marble slab you may read the following inscription:

To the memory of the
Rev. Robert Smith, D. D.
Who departed this life
April 15, 1793
In the 71st year of his age."

Forty-two years pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Pequea.

He was a faithful, eminent and successful divine long at the head of a public seminary. A great part of the Clergy of this State received the elements of their education, or perfected their Theological studies under his directions. Beneath this monument sleeps a "Father in Israel." This was the theological giant that founded Cedar Grove church.

Dr. Smith, for in 1760 Princeton conferred D. D. on him, is indeed a Father in Israel as well as the Father of the Church to the members of the venerable old church to this day. During the forty-two years of his rugged life in the saddle and pulpit, for he rode many miles from one preaching point to another, he missed but one appointment on account of illness. Dr. Smith was not only an able and eloquent preacher but an educator of the highest character. The influence that went out from his classical Theological Institution or seminary has never received its due credit. There are many living today in the community of the Martin Diem farm, but three hundred yards north of the church where the parsonage and academy were located, who are not aware that from this locality knowledge radiated to all the eastern part of the colonies like the radio that now sends forth news to the ends of the earth. This historical spot is worthy of being marked with a substantial memorial as the seat of learning that had but few equal during the Colonial days.

Among the teachers who assisted Dr. Smith was James Waddell of Virginia, later in life known as the eloquent Blind Preacher of whom Patrick Henry said he was the greatest orator he ever heard. William Wirt of Maryland was one of the famous students, best known as a great lawyer, and while Attorney General of the United States in Jefferson's Cabinet, prosecuted Aaron Burr for treason in 1807 at Richmond, Virginia. Dr. Smith's sons were all educated here for the ministry. The oldest, Samuel Stanhope, became president of Princeton College.

The greatest of the students who came to this wilderness seat of learning was John MacMillan, D. D., the Apostle of Presbyterianism in the west, the founder of Jefferson College and the renowned preacher and teacher of theology in his log cabin college at Washington, Pa. It has often been a marvel to me why young men from the best families from New England to Virginia came to this remote wilderness to obtain a classical education. I can only account for it in the fact that Dr. Smith was more than an ordinary preacher or teacher.

Perhaps what I here copy from the sketch of Pequea Presbyterian Church by Rev. W. C. Alexander may throw some light on Dr. Smith's personality and character.

"Dr. Smith had a near neighbor by the name of Haines. They were good friends and often visited each other." One day Dr. Smith said: "Friend Haines I notice that although we are good friends and neighbors, yet I have never seen you at my church." "That is very true friend Robert, but thee knows the reasons. We Quakers, as we are called, are not in favor of a hireling ministry who are educated especially for that purpose. We favor those only who preach by the Spirit." "Well, said the Doctor, without entering upon the first point of your objection at present, I think I can say that we Presbyterians follow the teachings of the Spirit in our sermons to the people." "O no, friend Robert, thee knows very well that thee prepares the discourse before thee enters the pu.pit." "That is quite true to some extent, but I can preach without such previous preparations." "Well then, says the Quaker, I will try thee." I will go hear thee preach on this condition: Namely, that I will give thee a text which thee must not see until thee goes into the pulpit." "I accept the offer," says Dr. Smith. "Very well, then I will go to thy meeting house next first day and will send up the text by the sexton after thee has made the long prayer, which I learn thee makes." "That is not quite what I expected when you made the proposition," says Dr. Smith, "but I accept it, and will expect to see you at the Pequea church next Sunday morning."

Dr. Smith entered his pulpit on the next Sabbath morning with a good deal of anxiety. A glance over the congregation showed him that his Quaker neighbor was there, and at the appointed time he expected the text.

He commenced his services in his usual manner, and after the long prayer, he gave out a very long psalm to sing. As soon as the one who lead the singing rose, the sexton came up the aisle and handed him the text. It was from the book of Ezra, first chapter and latter clause of the 9th verse—"Nine and twenty knives."

He thought it was a sharp as well as a hard text. The singing of the long psalm gave him a few minutes for reflection. When that was ended he arose and announced the text and noticed many a smile upon the faces of the congregation. Even some of the venerable elders could not preserve the usual solemnity of their countenances. He proceeded with his discourse and spoke briefly of the captivity of the Jews in Babylon; of their condition there; the proclamation of Cyrus; of the wonderful preservation of the utensils of the Temple, which had been taken from Jerusalem by the conquerors of Judea; none of the knives which were used for slaying and preparing the sacrifices were lost, mislaid or destroyed. "They were under the special care and protection of God. Not a sparrow falls without His notice, and the very hairs of our heads are numbered." "The Lord knows them that are His, and none of them shall perish."

The Quaker was not only pleased but he was aroused and delighted. The next day he sent for Dr. Smith to dine with him. After dinner he invited Dr. Smith to take a walk around the farm, and coming to a pasture field in which were his cattle, he stopped and said "I was much pleased with thy discourse, Friend Robert, last first day. Now thee knows, we follow our leader George Fox, who bore his testimony against a hireling ministry. We never pay our public friends, but we sometimes give them presents. I wish to give thee a present. I have many good milk cows. I wish thee to select one for thyself."

Dr. Smith wished to decline the gift, but the Quaker insisted and said "I will be offended at thee if thee refuse." The Doctor having noticed a small and ill looking cow, said "Well, if I must take one of the cows, I will

take that small red cow," pointing to the one he had noticed and which he supposed the least valuable. "Well I do profess, says friend Haines, thee does not only preach by the Spirit but thee can choose by the Spirit. That little red cow is the best one I have. My wife would not sell it for one hundred dollars. But thee shall have it." And accordingly the same evening the little red cow was driven to the manse and proved to be a valuable acquisition to the dairy of Dr. Smith.

From 1724 to 1775, or fifty-one years, the members of Pequea who lived in the Conestoga Valley rode on horse back across the Welsh Mountains to the church services at Pequea.

Now the time has come when a place of preaching should be established on the north side of the mountain and the preacher do some horse back riding in place of the congregation.

In the summer of 1775 a site was selected on the farm of Robert Wallace near a stream of water and a spring in the midst of the forest trees. This place was near the present village of Blue Ball and was called "The Run." Here a platform was erected from which Rev. Dr. Robert Smith preached his first sermon that finally ended in the organization of a new church, ever since known as the Cedar Grove Presbyterian Church.

From 1775 to 1785, a space of ten years, the Gospel was preached from this platform every eighth Sunday when the weather permitted out-door services to be held.

It is of record that one Sunday a drove of cattle came near the congregation and a vicious bull charged the people and dispersed them. Dr. Smith did not attempt to finish his discourse, but pronounced the benediction and dismissed the congregation for the day.

In 1785 it was determined to select a more eligible site, where a permanent place for a church might be located and a house to worship therein erected.

A mile east of "The Run" was a beautiful grove of Cedars, which attracted the attention of the members. A spring of water close by was also a great inducement to select the new site that has become the historical place of Cedar Grove Presbyterian Church.

Beneath the limbs of a White Oak tree that mingled its shade with the cedars, a platform and seats were erected and on this spot Dr. Smith preached to the fathers of the present church, who are now asleep in the cemetery in the near by.

On the tombstones you read the names of Wallace, Martin, Galt, Russell, DeHaven, Brown, Davis, Ranck, Evans, Weitzel, Mason, Gehr, Norton, Dauge and many others of Scotch-Irish extraction and Presbyterian in faith.

Those who travel over the beautiful State Highway between Honey Brook and Blue Ball, pass this sacred consecrated spot where the "Little Church around the Corner" stands. I gave it that name some years ago, since the church stands in the angle where the road from Pequea strikes the State Highway. It is a beautiful location surrounded by majestic shade trees.

If you stop long enough to observe the surroundings you can read the following inscription on the front of the church:

Cedar Grove Presbyterian Church
Built 1786
Rebuilt 1827
Remodeled 1853

The first church edifice was erected of stone and the seats were arranged in such a manner that the building could be used during the week as a school house.

This building was built before the land was purchased, for the deed is dated March 5, 1787. The one hundred and ten perches were sold by Alexander McIlvain to James Galt and James McConnel as Trustees of the Corporation for thirteen dollars and thirty-three cents.

Every eighth Sabbath Dr. Smith preached two sermons in the new house, as was the custom then, with a recess of half an hour between the discourses.

On the first of March, 1790, a petition was circulated to obtain more of Dr. Smith's time. Twenty-four members signed their names to this paper and subscribed twenty-four pounds, thirteen shillings and nine pence, which in Pennsylvania currency, was \$65.83.

On October 2, 1790, a congregational meeting was held in which it was agreed that the salary of Dr. Smith should be \$266.66 as a compensation for his services.

The records of this meeting, however, show that the congregation had no money so the Trustees drew up a promissory note for the amount and presented it to Dr. Smith, who accepted it more for the good will than the value of the currency, which at the time was not as good as a note.

To throw some light on the compensation of a preacher of Dr. Smith's great attainments, I find that in 1790 his salary of the two churches, Pequea and Cedar Grove, was \$332.49.

As already stated, Dr. Smith died in 1793 and his successor was Rev. William Arthur who came from the South of Scotland.

On the 5th of January, 1796, he was installed at Pequea as the pastor of Pequea and Cedar Grove. Mr. Arthur labored in this field twenty-two years. He was a man of deep learning and especially remarkable for his firmness of character. He was not afraid to rebuke sin wherever he met it.

On a certain occasion, while passing a teamster, who was swearing at his horses, and commanding his leader to go to the place prepared for his Satanic Majestic, Mr. Arthur rode up to him in a solemn and decisive manner said "John, 'hell' was not made for horses but for such wicked hearts as yours."

During Mr. Arthur's period, Cedar Grove received one-fourth of his time. Hence, he crossed the mountain every fourth Sabbath, to preach at Cedar Grove.

Perhaps no service he did for the two churches, or incident that occurred during the more than twenty years he preached at Pequea and Cedar Grove has been transmitted from one generation to another more than the following amusing occurrence: "One Sabbath morning Mr. Arthur wished to cross the mountain to preach at Cedar Grove. He could not use his own horse on that occasion, and consequently obtained the loan of one from Mr. Galt, a neighbor and elder of Pequea. Mr. Arthur was fond of riding a good horse and Mr. Galt gave him a spirited blooded animal that in former days had been accustomed to the chase.

As Mr. Arthur was returning in the late afternoon from church, he heard the sound of dogs following the trail of a fox. As he began to ascend the mountain, he met the huntsmen, persons in the higher walks of life, some of them members of church, waiting for the hounds on the roadside. He rode up to them and began to rebuke them in his decided manner for breaking the Lord's Day. At this moment the dogs, on the trail, passed them and the huntsmen, not relishing the rebuke of Mr. Arthur, blew their horns, and darted off after the dogs. The horse on which Mr. Arthur rode seemed to have suddenly called to remembrance the scenes of the days of other years and in spite of all the efforts and remonstrances of his rider, leaped after the dogs. A race now ensued, through the midst of the dense forest, at the

imminent risk of a broken neck of the rider for more than five miles before the horse allowed himself to be reined in. Mr. Arthur now returned to his home exhausted by his strenuous ride, and with any other than pleasant associations.

A few days after this, one of the huntsmen met an elder of the church and as soon as he came up to him, he exclaimed: "Your preacher is one of the best riders in this part of the country. Last Sunday we were out after a fox, and he joined in with us and beat us all."

Rev. Amzi Babbit of New Jersey became the successor of Mr. Arthur and on the first Sunday in July, 1820, preached for the first time in the church at Pequea in the morning, from Luke 10-42 and in the afternoon at Cedar Grove from Romans 8-9.

He was not installed as the regular pastor of the two churches until April 5th, 1821.

He maintained his pastoral relation with Cedar Grove for ten years, or 1831, when on the last Sunday in October, he preached his farewell sermon from the following appropriate text: Philippians 2-12-13.

"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The two outstanding features of Mr. Babbit's ten years at Cedar Grove was the rebuilding and enlarging of the church in 1827, and establishing a Sunday School in the spring of 1820. This was the earliest Sabbath School in the Presbytery and the first one organized in eastern Lancaster County that has been continued to the present time.

The Lancaster Journal of Friday, July 28th, 1820, contains half a column, headed "The Grove Sabbath School in Earl Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania."

From it, it appears that a meeting of sundry inhabitants of Earl Township convened at the Grove Meeting House on the 31st of May, 1820, for the purpose of forming a Sabbath School Association.

Hugh Thompson was chosen Chairman and John Davies, Secretary. A Committee of Five consisting of Hugh Thompson, John Davies, William L. Smith, Davies Wallace and James Galt, Jr. was appointed when adjournment was taken to the 14th of June. On that day the committee reported a quaint and somewhat serious set of resolutions of articles and sections how the school should be organized and conducted.

Much of it at this late day appears like red tape. The officers were: President, James Galt, Sr.; Vice Presidents, Hugh Thompson, Margaret Smith and Elizabeth Kibler; Corresponding Secretary, William L. Smith; Recording Secretary, John Davies; Treasurer, Davies Wallace. In addition to the above names, Mary Ann Kibler, Harriet Wallace, Nancy Thompson, Catherine Sheaffer, Margaret Smith and Alexander Price were elected a Board of Managers. It is interesting to know that at this early day, one hundred and four years ago, there were more women active in this good work than men.

For two years, 1831 to 1833, Presbytery supplied Pequea and Cedar Grove. On November 5, 1833, Rev. John Wallace was ordained pastor of the two churches.

The Rev. John Wallace was not one of the East Earl Wallaces' but was born in Highland Township, Chester County. His parents were Quakers, but through the influence of a Mrs. Gibson, who was a devout Presbyterian, Mr. Wallace became a member of that church, received a classical education and studied theology. He remained the pastor of Pequea to 1866, the time of his death.

In the spring of 1839 a meeting of the congregation of Cedar Grove was held in the church at which Elder Edward DeHaven presided. The object of the meeting was to petition Presbytery, to organize Cedar Grove as a distinct and separate church. The Presbytery granted the request.

On the 18th of June, 1839, Rev. J. N. C. Grier, Rev. Joseph Barr and Rev. Alfred Hamilton, as a committee from the Presbytery, met with the session of Pequea church in the Cedar Grove church. The following members were accordingly dismissed from Pequea and became members of Cedar Grove as a distinct church. Elders: Edward DeHaven and John Wallace Robert Jenkins, Catherine Jenkins, Mary Jenkins, Phebe Carmichael, Davies Wallace, Mary Ann Wallace, Dr. Edward Wallace, Thomas Russell, Mary Russell, Eliza Russell, John Galt, William Galt, Alexander Galt, Frances Galt, Sarah M. Galt, Abraham DeHaven, Ann DeHaven, Mary DeHaven, Ann E. Jack, William Martin, Margaret Showalter, Henry Ranck, Margaret Ranck, John McConaughy, David Norton, George Sheaffer, Catherine Sheaffer and Elizabeth Kibler, the thirty-one members who were dismissed from Pequea, all resided in the Conestoga Valley, the Welsh Mountain to constitute the division between the two churches.

The following names constituted the new organization: Elders Edward DeHaven and John Wallace who represented the members on the north side of the mountain at Pequea. Abraham DeHaven and John Galt were the two new elders elected.

On the third Sunday in May, 1840, Rev. Alfred Nevin preached for the first time at Cedar Grove.

On the third Tuesday in December of the same year he was ordained as the first pastor of Cedar Grove. In 1845, after five years labor in this field, he accepted a call to the German Reformed Church at Chambersburg.

In October, 1845, Rev. William Hunter became the successor of Dr. Nevin and remained to April 1, 1849.

In 1842, Hon Robert Jenkins and other surviving descendants of David Jenkins, residing in Churchtown, resolved to select a spot of ground in the village to be set apart for the burial of their dead.

A year later in 1843, a church, a neat stone structure was completed and dedicated, in which the pastor from Cedar Grove was to preach on every Sabbath afternoon.

The Caernarvon Presbyterian Church of Churchtown is abandoned, for no preaching services have been had there for years. The old Academy building has been leased to the township school board for the village public school, and the only thing left is the graveyard that was located there for the Jenkins family.

On the first of April, 1849, Rev. John Leaman, M. D., was installed pastor of Cedar Grove. The following year the congregation erected a manse near the church for the use of the pastor. The house was built across the road, east of the church. The lot was purchased from John High and contains one hundred and five perches and cost \$78.75. The complete parsonage cost \$2,400.00.

At a meeting of the session held December 26, 1852, it was resolved to add two more members to the eldership and on January 8, 1853, George Russell and Henry Ranck were elected elders.

Mr. Russell lived in the locality of Beartown more than three miles from the church. He died in the Fall of 1897 and had the distinguished honor of serving the church as an elder for forty-four years.

During the summer of 1853 the church was remodeled and re-dedicated on August 31, the same year.

It was at this service that Dr. Leaman delivered the famous historical sermon from the text "Your fathers, where are they," Zechariah 1-5.

To Dr. Leaman, the present generation owes a debt of gratitude for preserving the history of the church from 1775 to 1853. It is a complete detailed sketch of 78 years of pioneer church history that any church can look upon with admiration.

I have covered but half of the time thus far, of the one hundred and fifty years the venerable church has been in existence, and realize that my paper must come to an end.

On the 6th of October, 1886, or 38 years ago, the congregation celebrated the Centennial of the erection of the first church building. It was a glorious, perfect autumn day and thousands from far and near gathered to honor the occasion. The old New Era of the 7th of October had two columns and a half on the front page that I had written of the most interesting event that occurred in the eastern end of the county for many a day. I distinctly remember the day and the days hard work for me to do justice to the affair. My research for a copy of the paper of that date was in vain. No one had one, even not I, for many of my papers were lost in my long absence from home. My only remedy was to go to the file of the New Era, which I did. It was my intention to use it in full, but I can only refer to a few facts and leave the whole report to be read next year when the church will celebrate the 150th year of its origin.

The all day services were held in the open air around a platform erected in front of the church. The interior of the church was beautifully decorated with plants, flowers, mottoes and evergreens. Behind the pulpit was the word "Centennial." To the left 1786 and on the right 1886. Underneath, the text "Hitherto the Lord has blessed us."

The exercises of the day commenced at 10:30 A. M. when Rev. Alfred Nevin, D. D., of Philadelphia, and Rev. D. W. Gerhard of the New Holland Reformed Church, entered the pulpit. Mr. Gerhard offered prayer, after which Dr. Nevin arose and said "Forty-six years ago I came to this church for the first time. Now I am called upon to baptize two of the grand children of those who were members then."

Rev. Mr. Collier of Downington followed with prayer. Dr. Nevin read the 23d Psalm. The congregation singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and adjourned to the platform in front of the church.

Rev. J. Y. Mitchell, D. D., of the First Presbyterian Church, Lancaster, was chosen to preside for the forenoon services. In the afternoon, Rev. Dr. Stevens of Plattsburg, New York, presided.

Rev. J. W. Hassler, D. D., of the New Holland Lutheran Church, was the first open air speaker and was followed by Rev. L. M. Ross of the Pequea Presbyterian Church, Rev. Mr. Anderson and Rev. W. G. Cairns of Octorara and Middle Octorara, Rev. J. D. Geary of the Evangelical Association of Bridgeville, Rev. W. D. Woodring of the same denomination of Terre Hill, Rev. T. S. Sherrard of the Honey Brook Presbyterian Church and Rev. E. W. Gaylord of Paradise. The singing of the day was by a large choir from the different churches of the eastern end of the county.

The evening services were held in the church and Dr. Nevin preached the sermon.

In his introduction he said that he first preached in this church on May 20, 1846, while on his way to Indianapolis, Ind., where he had received a call at \$1,800.00 a year but through an accident missed the stage coach and received a call to Cedar Grove for \$500.00 a year and accepted it.

The day's Centennial came to a close when Rev. W. J. Hoar, the pastor of the church at the time, pronounced the benediction.

The ladies of the congregation had provided an abundance of food for dinner and supper and over a thousand enjoyed the refreshments on the lawn of the parsonage.

The church during its one hundred and fifty years of existence had but thirteen pastors: Robert Smith, William Arthur, Amzi Babbit, John Wallace, Alfred Nevin, William Hunter, John Leaman, John W. Newell, Robert Shaw, Lawrence M. Stevens, William J. Hoar, Robert C. Pitzer, John M. Buyers.

The one who served the longest, thirty-seven years, was William J. Hoar, from 1875 to 1912, when he retired and is now living on West End Avenue this city.

Rev. John M. Buyers is the present pastor.

The Elders from 1853 to 1900 were: George Russell, 44 years; John S. Wallace, 29 years; Christian Stauffer, 31 years; Edward M. Wallace, 18 years; Martin C. Weiler, 11 years; Henry W. Weaver, 18 years.

All of these have passed to their reward long ago.

The present session consists of: William E. DeHaven, Daniel W. Oehme, George S. Gehr, John F. Myers, Horace C. Wanner, Oliver Singer.

The church has a membership of a few more than a hundred at the present time, and a Sunday School that numbers about the same.

This church has sent out, from among the number of her members, ministers and missionaries to other fields of labor. She has always been small but never weak.

Through the kindness of Providence she has maintained herself for a space of one hundred and forty-nine years, often under most adverse circumstances. Surrounded by a population that is almost inaccessible to Presbyterian doctrine, the church kept its own, and has left a religious influence in the community that will never perish.

The venerable, quaint little church edifice, the cemetery with its sacred dead on the three sides of the church, the century old trees around the place, has made it a most attractive and restful spot and landmark in eastern Lancaster County.

The history of the church is the history of civilization. The world over, nations rise and fall, but the church of the living God goes on for ever.

The church in every community is the unit of the nation's history, just as much as the family is the unit of the State in government. The little rural church such as Cedar Grove is the back-bone of the religious thought of the nation. Here the simple, fundamental creeds and doctrines are taught that make great Christian characters in the Master's service, who become the pillars and strength for the big city congregations, as preachers and laymen.

In conclusion, I beg leave to acknowledge my sincere gratitude to each one who so kindly assisted me in my research for material relating to the early history of the two congregations, Pequea and Cedar Grove.

I am especially indebted for the information obtained from Dr. John Leaman's very excellent history of Cedar Grove, published in 1853, and to Rev. Dr. W. C. Alexander's most interesting history of the Pequea Presbyterian congregation, delivered September 8th, 1876, at Pequea.

It was a somewhat laborious task to secure the facts I have written about, but I did it as a labor of love for the reverence I have for the "Little Church around the Corner," where my family and I for many years had the benefit and spiritual consolation, as well as the fellowship of the community as neighbors.

Author: Seyfert, A. G.

Title: History of Cedar Grove Presbyterian Church in East Earl Township / by Hon. A. G. Seyfert.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Cedar Grove Presbyterian Church (East Earl Township, Pa.)
Presbyterian Church--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County.
Presbyterians--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1924

Description: 99-108 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 28,
no. 7

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.28

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

=====

+++++

Institution Name
Institution Address
Institution Phone Number
Institution E-mail Address