

Methodist Church Founded 120 Years Ago

Peter Cartwright Preached Here Back In 1850's

The Methodist Society of Mount Pulaski was the first religious organization in the town after its establishment in 1836.

The Society was organized at the home of Dr. John Clark, in 1841. Among the early pastors were Samuel Clappett, Samuel H. Martin, and Hardin Wallace. The latter held one of the most successful series of protracted meetings known to the county in pioneer days. Over 50 additions were made to the membership of the church.

Until 1851, church services were held at Dr. Clark's residence and in the village school house. Peter Cartwright, the famous pioneer preacher who lived on a farm near Springfield, was the Presiding Elder of the District and frequently held meetings and preached here in the early days of the Society.

In 1848, a movement was started by the Society to build a church. A meeting was held on Dec. 12, 1849, and the following trustees were elected for a term of three years to secure a lot for building purposes: John Harry, John Clark, Norman Norton, James J. Snyder and John M. Downing. In 1851 on May 21st, a lot was secured at the corner of Jefferson and Vine Streets in Mount Pulaski and a small frame church building was erected thereon. The Mount Pulaski Circuit was established in the county, and to hold all their property, the circuit was incorporated in 1852 and the trustees named were: John Randolph, Daniel Clark, Isaac Clark, Joseph D. Dement and William Leimly.

At this time the Mount Pulaski Society was the leading Methodist organization in the county and the head of the circuit. The circuit included 14 societies: Mt. Pulaski, Zion, Dalbey's, Day's School House, Two-Mile Grove, Downing's, Hurricane Point, Whiteman's, French's, Metcalf's, Bateman's, Sugar Creek, Mount Pleasant and Postville. On organization of the churches at Lincoln and Lawndale in 1853, these were added to the circuit. Lincoln took the place of Postville, making 15 appointments in the circuit. In 1853, the circuit created in Mount Pulaski Township was then known as the Union camp ground. In 1860, the circuit was divided in two circuits, Lincoln and Mount Pulaski. The Mount Pulaski circuit included Chestnut, Cornland, French's Chapel and Pleasant Valley. Some years later, Latham was added. In 1861, the trustees were John Clark, Alexander Mills, Creed H. Dawson, George A. Robinson and Ninnian R. Cass, who purchased lots for the erection of the parsonage.

In 1884, the Society erected a new church on the site of the old one. It cost about \$3000 and was dedicated Nov. 9, 1884 by the Presiding Elder Prentice of Springfield, and Professor Adams of Bloomington. The present church structure was built in 1907 using the old building as a basis. It was Gothic in design, 50 by 53 feet in dimensions. It contained an auditorium and a Sunday School room on the first floor with a small dining room, kitchen and furnace room in the basement. Those on the building committee were Rev. H. B. Montgomery, C. M. Silkey, M. A. Crane, J. M. Gray and Robert Aitchison.

In the spring of 1923 the rest of the basement was excavated, concreted and refinished by donated labor, making a large dining and assembly room, kitchen, toilets and a new furnace room. Rev. James E. Reynolds was pastor at that time. The building committee consisted of William Beckers, Albert Shellhammer, Albert Allspach and John Hershey.

Of late years, the old Mount Pulaski Circuit has disappeared.

Cornland, Chestnut and Latham had become separate churches, Pleasant Valley was abandoned, French's Chapel has been attached to the Elkhart Church, and Mount Pulaski has become a station church.

LADIES AID SOCIETY

The Ladies Benevolent Aid Society of the Mount Pulaski Methodist Church was organized in October 1883. The pastor at that time was Rev. W. R. Howard.

The prime object of the society was to assist in raising funds for the building and furnishing of a new church in the aforesaid village.

Mrs. Mary Upp was elected secretary of the Aid Society July 6, 1911, and served one year. She was then elected again in 1915, and served until Dec. 6, 1945, a total of 31½ years.

In November, 1940, the aid was called by a new name. It was to be known, and still is, "Woman's Society of Christian Service." Only the name changed, as the services were just the same.

MINISTERIAL LEADERS, PREACHERS AND PASTORS IN THE HISTORY OF THE MOUNT PULASKI CHURCH

The first Methodist sermon was delivered in a school house by a local preacher, Brooks Randolph, around 1840.

The first presiding elders were S. W. D. Clark, Peter Akers, and Peter Cartwright.

The first pastors to preach here were Fortner Crissy, D. H. Hutton, Father Watt, Dr. Lord E. King and Hardin Wallace.

The following regular pastors served the church through the years since:

1849—J. C. Baker
1850—J. C. Rucker
1851—W. Pittner
1852—3—L. Anderson
1854—A. R. Garner
1855—R. Bird
1856—W. B. M. Colt
1857—B. Bartholo
1860—1—J. Everly
1862—3—W. B. Barton
1864—B. Bartholo
1865—S. E. Pendleton
1866—J. B. Houts

1867—G. Garner
1868—J. B. Houts
1869—Supplied by Bankston
1870—D. A. Grimes and R. C. St. Clair
1871—2—T. D. Weems
1873—4—D. E. May
1875—J. C. Kellar
1876—C. E. McClintock
1877—A. B. McElfresh
1878—J. W. Lapham
1879—80—C. Powell
1881—2—W. C. Lacy
1883—4—W. R. Howard
1885—7—P. F. Gay
1888—9—G. Cunningham
1890—1—P. Slagel
1892—3—J. A. Burks
1894—5—J. H. Hartwick
1896—8—F. S. Artz
1899—01—W. W. Theobald
1902—04—F. W. Greer
1905—08—H. B. Montgomery
1909—10—G. W. McConkey
1911—13—A. A. Heinlein
1914—15—W. M. Carter
1916—18—Wm. Cross
1919—20—C. A. Ward
1921—J. C. Bell
1922—24—J. E. Reynolds
1925—27—S. H. Hoar

1928—34—H. M. Blout
1935—36—T. L. Kneebone
1937—51—F. E. Neumeyer
1952—55—Richard Muhleman
1956—61—John E. Muir
1961—Clifford Smith

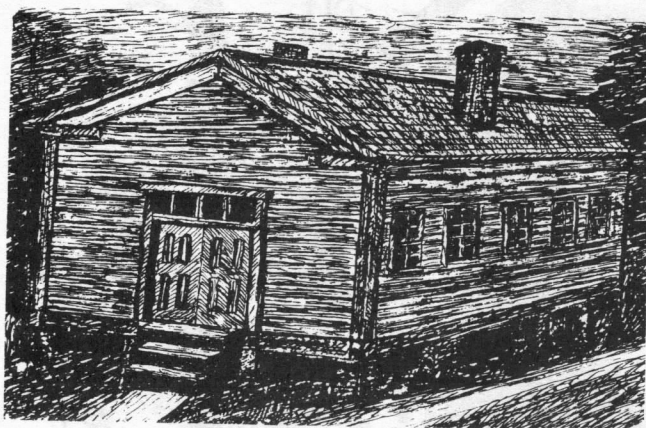
CENTENNIAL YEAR CELEBRATED IN 1951

The church celebrated its centennial in 1951. The Centennial Committee consisted of Rev. F. E. Neumeyer, Albert Shellhammer, Harold Donnan, Morrell Deibert and Louis Schafer.

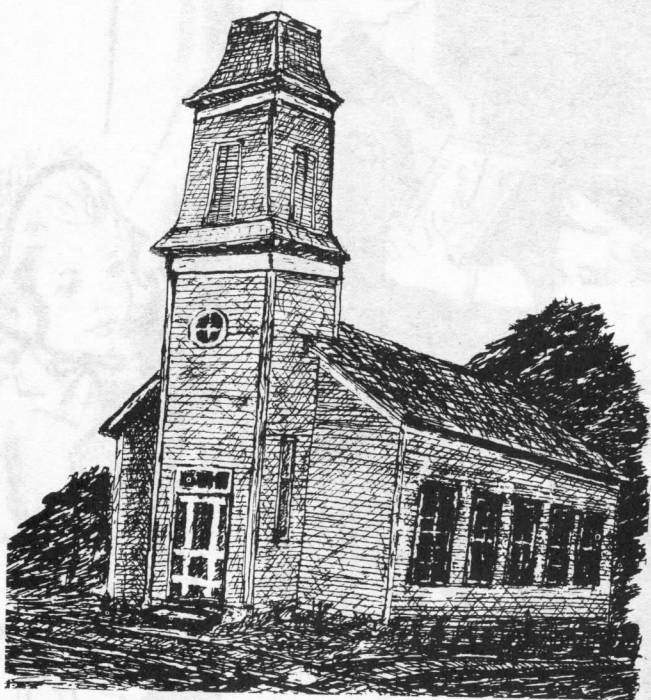
In 1958 the church was forced to face a real crisis. After the explosion in Mount Pulaski of the Illinois Central tank car on June 1, 1958, almost \$34,000 damage was done to the church. The congregation had to decide whether to repair the old structure or to build a new building. In January of 1962 a Congregational Meeting was held and it was voted to build a new church. The new building was be-

(Continued on next page)

FOUR IMPORTANT STEPS



SECOND CHURCH—1884



In The Growth Of The Mount Pulaski METHODIST CHURCH

FIRST CHURCH—1851

THIRD CHURCH—1907



1959 . . . And Looking Forward to the Mount Pulaski of Tomorrow, We are Very Proud of Our New Church Home.

