

PAST 50 YEARS—

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about in pretty dresses carrying plates of ice cream and cake to the "customers," while the young men waited impatiently, each hoping for a chance to talk to his best girl, as the children ran and played happily, or begged "Papa" for a dime for another dish of ice cream.

30 gallons of ice cream was hauled out from Mt. Pulaski via wagon and team, and all too often, it seemed, a thunder storm would build-up and spoil the ice cream social.

Boys will be boys, they say, and this truth was made evident many times during the Revival meetings, as young men, said to be from a neighboring village caused considerable aggravation on the part of the church goers.

For instance, taps on buggy wheels were often loosened during the time services were in progress, so when one started home it was wise to check the taps lest your buggy wheel ran off on the way home, as this thing was known to have occurred. Then the buggy whips and the lap robes would often disappear, so the driver's finally contrived a way buggy shafts, and to carry their lap robes inside the house to would be found unhitched from safety. Sometimes the horse the buggy, and sometimes they were untied from the hitchrack and turned loose so they would go home, leaving the owner a-foot!

Then there were the trouble-makers, who, sitting in the very back pew, would mumble, laugh and shuffle during services hoping to create a disturbance. But a long, stern look or caustic reprimand from the God fearing man in the pulpit would usually restore order, and bring guilty looks to the culprit's faces.

Solemn, but happy wedding ceremonies were conducted within the old building. Many funeral parties with long, horse-drawn processions gathered to pay their last respects to the deceased, and it was considered Bad Luck to count the number of vehicles in a funeral procession.

The Copeland Christian Church was truly the heart of the community. Here people worshipped the Living God, prayer, sang, rejoiced, wept, or laughed, as the occasion demanded. The church was a Home to which the people turned in their many and various needs of the soul.

Around 1903 the Bible School was begun with a few pupils and a few volunteer teachers, this effort continuing and progressing through the years as a most successful means by which is taught the Word of God. As attendance increased and class corners became crowded, agitation for more room began.

Through the efforts of the Ladies' Aid and others, funds were raised for building, and in the summer of 1955 the third major remodeling was done on the Church House consisting of a large room and its basement at the east end. The basement was converted into a modern kitchen and the large room above into a class room for the ladies. 40 or 50 local men gave their time and talents to the erecting of this addition and when it was finished a banquet of appreciation was given them by the ladies of the church.

By the year 1956 the Church had called a full-time minister, in comparison with the "parttime" and "half time" of previous years.

Missionary endeavor had increased considerably; the Bible School was operating with 100 or more in attendance.

The annual basket dinner continues to be observed, 4th Sunday in June. No longer do the good ladies in long full dresses, bustles, and bows, spread cloths on the grass as "tables" for the food, for now we have the full basement and all things necessary to serve a delicious meal. Besides, there are so many shining Fords, Chevrolets, Pontiacs parked in the yard there is no room left in which to spread tablecloths.

Good roads are now a reality. No longer need the people ride in lumbering farm wagons or on horseback through clinging mud,

or jolt miserably over frozen ruts in order to attend church services. No more, need they ride slowly home in pitch darkness, unharness the horses by touch rather than by sight, for now, cars with brilliant head lamps are the common thing.

Vacation Bible School, beginning in 1948 under the direction of Mr. and Mrs. Vern Barr, the pastor at that time, has continued to be an annual event with 50-60 children in attendance.

Sunday morning and Sunday evening services continue to be held as in days of old. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is upheld; souls are won to Christ, and strengthened by the messages of that Gospel presented from Pulpit; the teachers desk; and by living example.

Present day officers of the church and its various organizations are as follows:

Official Board

Elders — Fred Bellatti, Eles Quandt, Frank Pope, John Stophier.

Deacons — Otto Henrichsmeyer, Oscar Poffenbarger, Duane Copeland, Robert Gulso, Kenneth Trago, Sheldon Copeland, J. Lee Hild, Robert Shanle, Sr.

Pastor—Gerald Burt.

Ladies Aid Society

President—Ruby Quandt
Vice-Pres.—Irene Volle
Secretary—Alma Sanle
Treasurer—Nancy Shanle

Bible School Officers

Supt.—John Stophier
Ass't. Supt.—Ellis Green
Secretary—John Poffenbarger
Treasurer—Sheldon Copeland
Pianists—Joyce Wood, Ruby Quandt.

Bible School Teachers

Men's Class—Gerald Burt
Women's Class—Ruby Quandt
Young Adults—Frank Pope
High School—Meria Bowers
Intermediate—Emogene Green
Junior—Margaret Henrichsmeyer

Primary—Brenda Lowe
Primary—Bill Shanle
Beginners—Joyce Wood

Sponsors for Christian Endeavor and Study Groups

Adult—Ruby Quandt
Senior—Mr. and Mrs. Bill Shanle; Mr. and Mrs. Robt. Gulso.
Junior—Mr. and Mrs. John Stophier.

Primary—Rue Evelyn Copeland, Lucille Pope.

Copeland Reminiscent

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home with them for Sunday dinner. Their latch string hung on the outside, and they were certainly given to hospitality.

Next I see Uncle Ham Copeland waddling in to the services and taking his accustomed seat. While he had no rented pew, he usually occupied the same seat, and I see the grease spot on the wall where his curly locks rested while listening to the sermon. His home was the well-known Oliver Gulso place. Then Uncle John Copeland and his wife, Mariah, the latter being one of the charter members. They lived where Oscar Henrichsmeyer now lives.

Andy Buckles and family, who lived southeast of Mount Pulaski, were usually on hand, far away as they lived. I see the girls in their red and black striped worsted dresses; their calfskin shoes polished to a finish with the old style boot blackening. No Shinola; nor pumps and silk hose, but calf skins tallowd up for home and school wear during the week, and shined for Sunday.

Then came the Harberts; Sam and wife being charter members; Eli and wife coming into the church later. Dave Birks and wife Sarah Jane, were always there with their old hymn book; words printed in verse form, but without musical notes. I have no idea how, when or where, they caught the melody, but they sang just the same. Then there were the Paynes, the Barclays, Shinn, Bowers, Combs, Lawrences, Scroggins, and many others who came later.

My first recollection of a Basket meeting at Copeland dates back to when Robert Buckles was a little boy 3 or 4 years old. My mother spread her dinner with his mother (Aunt Liz).

I was glad to have mother set dinner with her because she had a big stone jar full of straw-berries. One thing especially I remember on that occasion was Bobbie, who had a habit of tying strings to his toes and calling them his horses. This was how he spent his time while his mother spread the dinner. I fancy I see him yet as he sat on the ground clucking to his horses and saying "get up".

In those days we had no tables but spread table cloths on the grass and everyone became humble as he got down on his knees and helped himself.

I do not remember who the preacher was on this occasion, but I presume it was Uncle John England as he was among the first preachers I am able to remember. A few years later came Joseph E. Cain, who lived on a farm and divided his time between the Buckles and the Copeland Churches. It was under his preaching that I made the good confession and was baptized by him August 23, 1876.

Uncle Bolivar Turley and family moved into the neighborhood at a later date and they, like others I have mentioned, were given to hospitality. Their home was the preacher's home. A better family never lived in Copeland neighborhood. Another family came later; husband, wife and two children, a little curly-haired boy, and a tiny girl, who grew to womanhood and became one of our faithful workers.

I remember the little girls who were in my S. S. Class, the youngest one being a tiny tot with a high keyed voice, which in fancy I still hear as she tries to read.

Another incident I would like to relate is this—that Cal Paynes' mother gave him a whipping during services at Copeland, which must have been the turning point in his life, as in later years he became Elder and S. S. superintendent.

Revival services were held in those days for the harvest was fully ripe. W. F. Black held a revival meeting in August, 1886, lasting 4 or 5 weeks, with the result that 80 souls were added to the church. A basket dinner was held every Lord's Day during the meeting.

A year or so later came Knox P. Taylor, who held a weeks' institute. He was well equipped with maps, charts, blackboard, and to me the Bible became a real Book, concerning real people. His manner and illustrations were both simple and unique. He led us to love the reading of the Bible, and taught us how to teach it.

From a number of families mentioned has come a large portion of our official board, S. S.

officers, teachers, Ladies' Aid officers. Not alone in the Copeland community is the influence of these early Christians felt. For in many different communities and churches we find faithful workers who first found Christ at Copeland church, and have gone out to serve that Christ wherever they may be.

And so, tho many of our Christian forefathers have gone to their reward, their influence is living on, and radiating in the hearts and lives of many.

"Lives of great men oft remind us

We can make our lives sublime; And departing, leave behind us Footprints on the sands of time. Footprints, that perhaps another Sailing o'er life's solemn main, A forlorn and shipwrecked brother

Seeing, shall take heart again. Let us, then, be up and doing With a heart for any fate, Still achieving, still pursuing.

PRESENT COPELAND MINISTER**JERRY BUR.****ZIMMERMANN BUILDINGS TORN DOWN; TO REBUILD (March 17, 1938)**

Workmen have torn down the old Zimmermann frame buildings on South Washington St. adjoining the Myers Bros. Store on the corner. Two 1-story modern brick buildings are to be erected by the owner, Theodor Zimmermann. The buildings are to be 22x75 feet and will be a decided improvement to the block.

95 Years of Christian Service...

The congregation of Copeland Christian Church was organized 95 years ago Aug. 11, 1866, the white frame building situated 7 miles S.W. of Mt. Pulaski, being erected the autumn following and dedicated Dec. 11, 1867.

The changing rural scene, its efficient machinery reducing the need for farm laborers, has brought about a decrease in the rural population. Many have found it necessary to forsake their rural homes to seek employment in the cities.

This situation of lessened population has been a factor in the closing of a number of rural churches over the land.

Yet, in the midst of these adverse conditions, Copeland Church continues to open her doors twice each Sunday for worship services, with a morning average attendance of 100.

For 95 years this church has functioned, giving spiritual strength, comfort, and direction to lives which sought it.

Many who now sleep in the sod of Steenberg Cemetery are among those who had part in making history of both the City of Mt. Pulaski and of Copeland Christian Church. They could tell of the Old Settlers meetings in Mt. Pulaski; the picnic dinners on the square; the ladies with their long skirts dragging the dirty streets; the long planks on upturned tiles forming benches on which the old-timers sat and listened - more or less - to the long-winded politicians, or to the loudly playing Town Band. Or of the baby contests, when every mother present knew full well that her baby was the most beautiful one, decrying the judges' poor taste when her squalling little darling failed to win the prize.

A more tender note is added as many of these same settlers would recall the annual Basket Meeting at Copeland Church when friends and relatives not seen for perhaps a year would gather in their spiritual home, visiting, eating, showing off their new babies; afterwards in the hard pews, singing together the good old hymns, and nodding heads in approval as an eloquent, bewhiskered preacher of the Gospel warned them of a Hell to shun, and a Heaven to gain.

95 years of Copeland Church history has been lived. Those who served in these several decades have, most of them, lived out their time, playing their part on the stage of life, then making their exit from the scene.

Their zeal, their will, their consecration, their efforts, though imperfect, have left to the rural community of Copeland this sturdy, faithful and effective little church.

Inside her walls our children have been taught the love of God, and the principles of Christian living. From her pulpit has sounded forth, for 95 years, urgent messages from the Word.

Hands of assistance have reached across the wide seas to give aid to those doing the Master's will of giving the Gospel to the world.

Young men from the group have left her doors to serve their country and keep her free, both in time of peril and in time of peace.

Copeland Church is a family. We are concerned about each other. Our joys and our tears are shared. God is our Eternal Father, and Christ our Elder Brother.

The past is over and gone. As far as the early workers of the Church are concerned, they sleep the peaceful sleep of death.

Yet, across the tapestry of the years, the silver gleams among us of the present, as we in turn seek to carry on the work left to us.

And what of the future of this rural congregation?

We cannot say. There may be perilous and dangerous times ahead for all of those of the Christian faith. Yet, though we do not know the future, we know who holds our hand. We expect to press on, to sow the seed, to build young lives, preparing them and inspiring them to Christian service that they may in turn take the lighted torch of faith from aging hands which must some day lay it down, carrying it on to victory. And if the great Ship of Zion must ride rough and turbulent seas, we shall look to our Great Pilot to bring us safely into the Eternal Harbor.

"If God be for us, who can be against us?" - asks the Apostle Paul. The Christian world is not doomed! It marches on, and on, and on, for God marches with us.

May we offer our congratulations to the people of Mt. Pulaski for their many good works, and for their fine efforts in regard to its Sil-Tennial Anniversary. Also, let us express our appreciation for their good will, and for the many kind words spoken in connection with Copeland Church.

Congratulations to the people of Copeland Church for their steadfastness, their loyalty, in the face of much distress and spiritual upheaval in the world at large.

Appreciation and congratulations to Mr. Harry Wible and his crew for their time-consuming efforts in putting together the fine edition of the Times-News, commemorating the Mt. Pulaski Sil-Tennial Celebration of 1961, something to be cherished for many years.

Each night, when the curtains of darkness are drawn, the lights of Mt. Pulaski shine forth brightly in all directions. People from considerable distances can see the glittering lights on the Hill.

Even so, may Christ, the Light of the world, continue to shine forth from the lives of those who make up Copeland Christian Church, that many now in darkness might be safely guided upward to the glorious hills of Eternity and the Heavenly Home.

COPELAND CHRISTIAN CHURCH