

REVERIES OF PAST DAYS

Dr. F. O. Eakin 1971

It is not my purpose to write a history of the West Pennsylvania Eldership or Conference. This has been ably done by those more ably gifted than myself. Dr. C. H. Forney gives us the history of the beginning and early days of the Eldership in his general History of the Churches of God. Dr. S. G. Yahn gave us a later brief history assisted by Revs. J. D. Patterson and J. I. Kalp.

I shall not include statistics as they are not available to me now. Besides, they are preserved for us in the printed annual journals. I will be limited to my memory of conditions and events which came under my own observation. Naturally many important events will have been entirely forgotten and my impressions might not coincide with others observing the same events. My purpose is to preserve the facts of earlier days that the present generation may more fully appreciate the rich inheritance that has come to them through the sacrifice and labors of their predecessors, and be inspired by their zeal and faithfulness under primitive conditions.

My familiarity with the West Pennsylvania Eldership began with my being licensed at Ursina in October 1901. The seventy years since then has without doubt been the greatest era in the history of man so far as material progress is concerned. The changes that have taken place in almost every phase of life are almost unbelievable. Electricity was just coming into general use. A few automobiles were being toyed with by the rich. Radio and television and airplanes were only dreams. Most labor on farms and in shops was still done by human skill as very few machines were yet invented. Wages were low; skilled mechanics received only about three dollars for a ten-hour day. Prices were low. Room and board could be had in many places for three dollars a week. The whole world has changed radically during this period and so has the West Pennsylvania Eldership.

CHAPTER 1 - THE ORGANIZATION

It was properly designated an 'Eldership'. It was composed entirely of Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders. The early ministers refused the title of Reverend and were designated Elders instead. By constitution, only a Ruling Elder could be a delegate. A 'Messenger' could be sent but would not be enrolled nor have any voice or vote in the Eldership.

Traveling was difficult in those "Horse and Buggy" days so many churches did not send delegates but just wrote letters specifying their desire as to pastor. There were no women's meetings in connection with the Eldership so the ministers did not bring their wives. Thus the attendance was small and even the small rural churches could easily entertain the Eldership.

Ministers were assigned for one year at a time so when Eldership time came every minister was without a job until re-assigned. The churches voted annually on 'Change' or 'No Change' and relayed their vote to the Eldership which had complete power to appointment.

Life Ordination had not come in until many years later so all ministers were working under Annual License and were required to make a full report to the Eldership. There reports were made orally unless sickness or other unavoidable conditions prevented it, when he could then report by letter. In early days these reports were also regarded as an examination of the minister

as to his efficiency in the work and anyone had the privilege to question him concerning his work and belief. If his report was satisfactory, a motion was made and carried that it be accepted and his License renewed for another year.

When I went over the old journals to compile the list of ministers enrolled, and when and how they left, I was perplexed by the number who had been given licenses but no mention made of their exit. I now presume they later failed to report to the Eldership and not having their license renewed were automatically dropped. Most of the ministers were very lengthy in their reports, recounting all special events of the year, presenting them in the best light possible to boost their reputation. The greater part of the sessions of the Eldership were taken up with these reports. Many were rather boring, a few were more interesting. Rev. Davie Stevens had such a sense of humor his reports were always enjoyed. In one report he said he had one wedding, the groom had given him one silver dollar, but when he looked at the bride, he concluded he had paid all she was worth. There were no report blanks in those days so our reports had to include all the statistics. None had been sent in previously so the Statistical Clerk took them down as we reported them. Most of our assessments were collected the last few weeks before Eldership and we brought the cash in our pockets and gave it to the clerk after we reported. So the Statistical Clerk could not complete his report until the last minister had reported and the Treasurer could not compile his report until the Statistical Clerk gave him his report and the money.

All officers boards and committees were elected or appointed annually so there were no partially prepared reports by any of them. No one was responsible for gathering material for these reports. Usually the first committee appointed by the new President was the Committee on Arrangements. They would meet during the noon recess and select the minister who would preach that night. The President would appoint at each session the one to conduct the devotions at the next session. The evening speakers were usually announced at the morning session for that evening and Sunday speakers on Saturday. All ministers were supposed to be prepared to preach when called on. Most of us came with several of our best sermon outlines in our pocket.

The first change in the organization came after the Woman's Missionary Society began to meet with the Eldership, and was the elimination of the requirement of Elders as delegates. Any man or woman could serve now. Soon after that the number of lay delegates was doubled, requiring both a man and a woman. This change was made after much debating. Some of the ministers were fearful that the lay delegates, if given a controlling vote, would take full control of the Eldership. Times have shown that those fears were needless. A third change came a little later when a youth delegate was also authorized.

Educational standards were very low. We had a very good Course of Study but it was not strictly enforced. Sometimes we had scarcely enough qualified men to fill the Board of Education. Only a few were college graduates, most of the younger men in the Eldership course. Many of the older men had been excused from the course because of age or insufficient education to take the course. Efforts were made often to raise the standard requirement of applicants for license to a college degree or at least a high school diploma but those of us favoring it were always outvoted.

In addition to the fall meeting of the Eldership, we had a Spring Convention, under the supervision of the Board of Education. At first it was just for ministers though the Women's Missionary Society met with us but in separate meetings. Our program was arranged entirely for the benefit of the ministers. Later it was enlarged to include in the program help for the Sunday Schools and Christian Endeavors and Laymen's Association, and attendance from all these groups was solicited. Most of these conventions were well attended and programs were very helpful and inspiring.

CHAPTER 2 - CHURCH DISTURBANCES

I entered the West Pennsylvania Eldership during a period of internal strife, both in the Eldership and the Churches of God. Bitter contention was raging over the teachings of 'Second Work Sanctification and Divine Healing'. It was the second crisis the Churches of God had faced over these teachings. The first one had occurred some years before my time and I think the center of conflict then was in the Ohio Eldership where some ministers, led by Rev. Warner, were teaching these doctrines. The matter was taken up by the General Eldership and the feelings became so bitter that Warner and his associates withdrew and established a new organization, retaining the name of the Church of God, with headquarters in Anderson, Indiana. This is the group with which our Churches are now having 'Fraternal Relations'. The second crisis, during which I came into the Eldership, had its center in the West Pennsylvania Eldership principally in the two locations of Butler and Barkeyville.

The Churches of God were not the only ones involved in this later controversy. A strong Holiness movement was launched in many of the denominations including the United Evangelicals and the Methodists. It was a REFORM movement intended to deepen the spirituality of the Churches. General Evangelists of most denominations were deeply involved. Holiness meetings were held in a great many leading churches. It seemed easier to get backsliders to seek a 'Second Work of Grace' rather than frankly acknowledge themselves as backsliders. The movement, while making great stirs in many denominations, did not last long and passed over with little or no conflicts. But such was not the case in our churches.

It is probable that many of our churches were partially affected but the greatest damage was to the Butler and Barkeyville Churches. The two leading ministers in the group teaching these disputed doctrines were Rev. James W. Davis who was pastor of the Butler Church and his son, Rev. George W. Davis, pastor of the Barkeyville Church. As a member of the Barkeyville Church, I was in the "hotbed" of it. I have always been of the impression that if the matter had been judiciously handled, it would have subsided amicably with us as it did with other denominations. Two leading factors entered into it; the struggle for political leadership and family jealousies. On the one side was Rev. James Davis and his son Rev. George Davis, both very prominent in the Eldership. On the other side was Rev. R. L. Byrnes, pastor at Brackenridge, and his son Rev. George Byrnes, prominent pastor at West Newton. The family factor added was that Rev. R. L. Byrnes and Rev. James Davis were double brothers-in-law. They had traded sisters in their first marriages but both wives had died and both ministers remarried. Rev. Byrnes had a very strong ally in Rev. S. G. Yahn, then pastor at Mt. Pleasant. They succeeded in having the Eldership place a ban on the preaching of second work and divine healing. As a result of that action, the Davis' withdrew from the Eldership (George was then pastor at Butler), taking with them Rev.

Herbert Dyke and Rev. Earl Carner. They all joined the Missionary Alliance Church. James Davis went to Palestine as a missionary, Earl Carner went to India as a missionary, and George Davis and Dyke went to California where they became leaders in the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. All of these men are now dead.

My connection with all these men was very intimate. I was converted under the ministry of Rev. R. L. Byrnes and of course knew his son George quite well. I was active in the work of the Barkeyville Church under the pastorate of Rev. George Davis, was a student in the Barkeyville Academy when he was president of it, had him as instructor in Homiletics and New Testament Greek. Rev. Herbert Dyke, while I attended Barkeyville Academy, was my Sunday School teacher. Rev. Earl Carner was my personal friend, we often visited in each others homes.

The local effects of the controversy was that at least two separate groups left the Butler Church and organized churches of their own, leaving the church so weakened that it never fully recovered. The Barkeyville Church was not quite so unfortunate. A small group withdrew from it and joined by a few from the Evangelical Church in Barkeyville and a few from the Methodist Church in Wesley, started a Holiness Church in Wesley. It only lasted a few years.

When I applied for license at the Eldership at Ursina in October 1901, I was subjected to very searching examination on those two doctrines by Rev. R. L. Byrnes and Rev. S. G. Yahn, both of whom were on the Licensing Committee. When asked if I believed in Second Work Sanctification, I replied that in one sense I did. When asked to explain my belief, I used this illustration. "Salvation is likened unto a well of living water, which is said at conversion to be placed within us. As times passes folks may become careless and allow many things of the world to clog up this well. Since a person is only converted or Born Again but once, the process of restoring this well must be a second work of grace. In fact, it may have to be repeated more than a second time for some folks who often relapse. It is, in fact, restoring the backslider." When asked if I would preach it as a second work, I said "certainly not", I would just call upon the backslider to return to God. I was granted my license and both Yahn and Byrnes became staunch friends of mine.

I give credit to Dr. Charles Manchester for bringing a peaceful close to the controversy in the General Eldership. He was then President of Findlay College. There had been some heated debate on the General Eldership floor, when Dr. Manchester entered the discussions. He very earnestly urged calm, considerate attitudes with kindly regard to others opinions. He assured the group there was no imminent danger from dissension if every one would just leave the Lord work out all differences in His own way. As to Divine Healing, he said the Bible tells us that, "If any one is sick, let him call on the Elders of the church and let them pray for him, and the prayer of the righteous will save the sick". (James 5:14-15) He said he had once anointed a man with oil for healing but was not radical on that point. He said it was persecution that made radicals, and if they let those who differ with them alone they would not become radicals or do any harm. His advice was taken and the matter dropped.

CHAPTER 3 - PARISH CONDITIONS

There were not many of our churches strong enough financially to fully support a minister as a station. Many times a circuit included a number of churches, requiring considerable traveling for the pastor and often without a parsonage. A few of our early ministers owned their own homes and traveled to their circuits. Rev. Shadrack Woods and his son Rev. Thomas Woods, Rev. Henry Barkey, and Rev. Domer all owned homes in Barkeyville and traveled to their various appointments. Rev. J. C. Cunningham owned his own home in Ursina and others in various places. Barkeyville was a "Preachers' Home Town" and the cemetery there was established and owned by the Eldership for many years as a place for the burial of ministers. Quite a number are buried there. When I was Clerk of the Eldership, I signed the deed transferring the cemetery to the local Cemetery Association.

Many stories of early days concern the "Circuit Riders" traveling with their Bibles in their saddlebags. A few of our early ministers had horses and buggies, but many did their traveling on foot. Walking was always good and most of the ministers were good walkers. My first official pastorate was in Jefferson County, consisting of Coolspring, Emerickville, and Rathmel, with a schoolhouse service occasionally at Skunk Hollow, 3 miles beyond Rathmel. My predecessor was a husky old man in his seventies, Rev. Henry Armstrong. He lived in Coolspring. He did not own a horse, but walked his circuit. His schedule was: Leaving Coolspring early Sunday morning, walking the ten miles to Emerikville in time for Sunday School and morning service, taking dinner in a church home, then walking 10 miles on to Rathmel and often three miles further to Skunk Hollow for the afternoon service, and back to Rathmel for the evening service; 26 miles and 3 services for the day. Staying overnight at Rathmel, he would start every early Monday morning and walk the twenty miles back to Coolspring in time to do the week's washing as his wife was in very poor health. When I came on the work, I followed the same schedule excepting that I had a horse and buggy which my father had given. When Rev. Armstrong was moved from there, he was assigned to the Garman Circuit and moved to Cherry Tree. He sent his wife on the farm wagon with their furnishings and he walked to Cherry Tree, leading the cow.

When I moved to Templeton, I could not use my horse to reach my appointments so I sold it. I was assigned four churches and an additional schoolhouse appointment - Templeton, Limestone, Mount Hope and Widnoon, with the Cochran Schoolhouse, five miles east of Templeton. I had good train connections to Mt. Hope which I served every two weeks. The Widnoon Church was without heat and only 1 family there so I did not have services there. I walked to Limestone and the schoolhouse appointments. When I went to Indian Head, I had five churches to serve and no horse. My schedule: Sunday morning I walked 5 miles to Buchannon for A.M. service, 3 miles to Clinton for afternoon service, 5 miles back to Indian Head for evening service; a total of 13 miles and 3 services. Next Sunday A.M. service at Indian Head, then walk 3 miles to Nebo for afternoon service and 3 miles back home, 3 miles to Hillview for evening service and back; 12 miles and 3 services. The second year there they bought a horse and buggy for the circuit for my use. Later at Kingwood, even after I had bought a second hand Ford, I could not use it during the winter as there were no improved roads. All cars in that section were put up for the winter. So I walked the circuit all winter with roads often drifted shut. Starting early Sunday morning I walked 8 miles to

Milford (the old church that burned down) in time for Sunday School, often taking dinner in homes several miles beyond the church, walking the 8 or more miles home in the afternoon, with evening service at Kingwood. Next Sunday morning service at Kingwood, walk 3 miles to Old Bethel for afternoon service and back home for evening service at Kingwood. I was a good walker and did not mind the walking. Never thought of it as a hardship. Others, I am sure, had greater hardship than I ever had. For example, I remember well R. L. Byrnes account of his trips.

TRAVELS OF DR. R. L. BYRNES

The circumstances which led Dr. Byrnes to recount his experiences on a circuit were these. He was secretary of the Stationing Committee and had just read their report, placing ministers for the coming year. In those days ministers were assigned for only one year at a time. The Stationing Committee was very secretive giving out as little information as possible until their report at the closing of the Eldership. Their report was final unless rejected by vote of the Eldership. Dr. Byrnes had finished reading the report and made the usual motion that it be adopted, when a young minister jumped to his feet and angrily demanded that the report be rejected. He had been re-assigned for several years to a small church at Glade Mills, along what is now Route 8, and he resented it bitterly. No minister wanted that church, and unfortunately no church wanted that minister, so it seemed an easy out to put them together. This young man accused the members of the Stationing Committee of appointing themselves to the best churches in the Eldership and sending the rest to churches which they would not take on a bet. He suggested that they take their turns on the poorer churches and give the other men a chance at the best places.

Dr. Byrnes was a very quiet, even-tempered man. He listened patiently until the young man had finished his tirade, then slowly replied: "What you say, young man, may seem to be true. It is a fact that the members of this Committee are presently pastors of the leading Churches of the Eldership. But we have each come up through the ranks of hard places until we have reached the better places by hard work and efficient service. We have taken our full share of the hardships of large circuits and difficult traveling. I myself spent several years on a large circuit with one church a distance away; to reach it, I had to cross a wide stream with no bridge within miles. When I came to that stream, even in winter, I would sit down on the bank in the snow and take off my shoes and socks, roll up my pants and wade through the icy water to the other side, sit down again in the snow and rub the numbness out of my feet, put on my shoes and go on to my appointment. Returning after the service, I would repeat the process. Now, young man, I am not asking you to do anything near as hard as what I have done." The young man sat down in silence. I was sitting beside Rev. D. A. Stevens. He turned to me and said, "I traveled that same circuit myself and did that same thing at that stream." This happened early in my ministry before I was familiar with the Eldership territory and I did not remember or hear the name of the circuit.

CHAPTER 4 - NEW CHURCHES

During the period covered by my membership, eleven churches have been received into the Eldership or Conference. The first one was during my first year as full-time pastor, which was on the Coolspring, Emerikville and Rathmel circuit. It was only a few miles distant from me and was added to my circuit the next year.

GRANGE

The Grange Church came into existence through quite an emotional upheaval. A young man by the name of Smith died. He was from a leading family in the community and had a very close friend, Jesse Hoffman, who was at his bedside as he approached death. Knowing he was dying, he asked Hoffman to pray for him. Hoffman was a backslider and could not pray, but he was deeply moved by the request and heartsick that he had failed his friend in the hour of his great need. He immediately fled into the woods and there on his face, repented of his sins and pledged God to become a preacher. At the funeral, he had the officiating minister tell the people of his repentance and to announce that that very night he was beginning a revival meeting in the Grange Hall and invited all the people to come and get right with God. They came, and many responded to the altar call that first night. The meetings continued for several weeks and if I remember correctly, some sixty made profession. After careful consideration of the various denominations in the nearby communities, they decided to organize a Church of God and Hoffman served them as pastor until when the church was accepted by the West Pennsylvania Eldership and placed on the Coolspring Circuit. I served it the next year. There had been some rumors as to Hoffman's conduct but most of us thought it was from before his return to God. The Eldership sent him to the Markleysburg Circuit where he had several good revivals, but again rumors were spreading and he was dropped.

ELLWOOD CITY

A number of the members of Lillyville and Belton Churches lived in Ellwood City and they wanted a church of their own so a building was obtained in West Ellwood. A General Eldership Evangelist by the name of Wyatt was engaged for a meeting which proved very successful and a promising church was established. It was placed on the Lillyville circuit which then consisted of Lillyville, Ellwood City, Belton and New Castle Mission. I served the circuit one year. Later on it was divided and I kept Ellwood City and New Castle Mission which gave me a living salary for that time. I had a good meeting in Ellwood and added a number of members. A few years later, colored folks came in and bought up the homes around the church and the church building was sold to them, with the intention of rebuilding in a more favorable location. But unfortunately, they could not agree on any new location and the members drifted into other churches. However, though the church was shortlived its influence was greatly extended. From it went out three ministers of the gospel. Roy Ehrheart was converted in my meeting and came into the church, graduated from Findlay College, and served our church in Butler for several years, then transferred to the Methodist Church serving some prominent churches in the Pittsburgh District. He died recently in Berlin, PA. Frank Conner was an active worker in the church during my ministry and later was the pastor of the West Newton Church for a number of years, ending his ministry with the Church of God in Canton, Ohio. Clarence Main also was very active in the Ellwood Church at the same time. He served as pastor for many years at Grange and died while pastor at Templeton. He was the father of C. Richard Main, now pastor at Templeton, and grandfather of Don Main, pastor at Brackenridge.

Other churches that have been received in this period as I recall were Franklin, Kennerdell, Latrobe, Kittanning, Greensburg, Colliers and Grove City.

SLOVAK CHURCHES

During a meeting held in Mount Pleasant by Rev. S. G. Yahn, quite a few of the Slavish and Polish people were converted and a separate church was organized by them in the east end of Mount Pleasant. It continued for a number of years when the members were transferred to the First Church in Mount Pleasant. Among the converts were two brothers, John and Jacob Luchansky who began to preach right after their conversion. Their ministry was among their own people. Their work as Home Missionaries was supported by the Eldership and they were ordained by it. Their work was mainly in the locations of steel mills and coal mines where the foreign population was located. They had many converts, who they visited regularly. Only two churches were organized, one in Mount Pleasant and one in Sharon, PA. The Sharon group built their own bethel and were served by men of their own language. The property was deeded to the West Pennsylvania Eldership. I had one funeral in the building when I was pastor at New Brighton. It was the son-in-law of John Luchansky. Not many of the congregation could understand English so John spoke briefly after my sermon. Later the congregation decided they wanted to be an independent group and asked the Eldership to return the deed for the property to them, which was done, as they had provided all the money for the property. They still retained the name Church of God. I do not know the later history of the group, but if the church is extinct and the property not claimed by anyone, the Eldership could claim it as being the mother church. Another missionary from that group was Joseph Seckley. He was employed by the Eldership for many years until his death. He also reported many converts among his people but, as usual, scattered far and wide and only a few in a place.

The effects of this Home Mission work was not confined to local places but also abroad. To our surprise word came to us later that several families from Sharon had moved back to Czecho-Slovakia and started missionary work among their friends there. Several churches had been organized and the work was being carried on without outside support.

By tactful approach these churches became associated with the General Eldership and were supported in part by our mission funds for some years. A Slovak minister, Stephen Carnock, who was serving as pastor for us, was sent to Czecho-Slovakia to investigate conditions and to encourage their work. He spoke their language and was well received and brought back favorable reports. When the Communists took over in Czecho-Slovakia the churches were badly suppressed. I do not know what conditions prevail there now.

Since this phase of home missionary work had been done entirely in a foreign language, there was no way to fully check on the missionaries' reports or to follow up the converts so there was little if any gain accrued by our churches. With the death of Joseph Seckley the work seemed to end.

CHAPTER 5 - CHURCHES DISBANDED

There have been twenty-two churches abandoned during the period of my membership as near as I can recall. Some of these were never strong and perhaps unwisely established. But several were strong, self-supporting churches for a time.

Venango County

Camp meetings were held regularly in many places throughout our church territory in the early days and some churches grew out of them. There were two camp grounds in Venango County. One was a small grove at the edge of Mechanicsville (new Wesley) about four miles north of Barkeyville, along Route 8. The other one was near Bullion between Wesley and Kennerdell, known as Camp Grove. A church was built there largely supported by Mr. John B. Henderson, a wealthy oil man, on whose farm the campground was located. It did not survive long after his death. It was on the Barkeyville Circuit.

The McQuiston Church was a few miles south of Kennerdell and east of Clintonville. It was on the Congress Hill Circuit. A Mormon Missionary had been allowed to hold a meeting in their Bethel. Sometime later one of the Elders became involved with his own daughter. Most of the members were so disgusted they vowed never to enter that church again. When I served that church I visited most of them but was unable to persuade them to break that vow, though many did admit they were sorry for it.

We have had two churches in the city of Franklin. The first one was before my time but my folks told me about it. My brother Joseph attended it. I think the Bethel they built is now owned and used by the Baptist Church, in third ward. It had its own pastor for some years. My brother told me of a remarkable meeting he attended in the home of the pastor, Rev. Bloyd. The pastor's wife was very seriously ill and the doctor gave them little hope for her recovery. A group of the church members had gathered in his home to pray for her. While they were praying, she arose from her bed and came out into the room where they were, unassisted, and told them she was healed. When the doctor visited her the next day he pronounced her well. I do not know what happened to the church, it may be they were unable to carry their debt from the building and sold it to the Baptists. The present church was organized by Rev. George Hulmes, then pastor at Congress Hill.

The Mount Olive Church was on the Barkeyville Circuit, just across the Butler County line. I think between Harrisville and Clintonville. I think Dr. Manchester organized it. It was badly neglected by some of the pastors. I was sent several times to supply for them. It was finally abandoned and the building sold, against the strong protest of the remaining members.

Butler County

The Butler Church was a thriving self-supporting church for a number of years. During the time of controversy over second work and divine healing many of our churches were affected but the Butler Church was the most unfortunate. It suffered two severe splits over these teachings, each time a large group withdrew and organized another church of their own.

The few remaining faithful ones were unable to regain sufficient strength to survive. Several faithful and efficient pastors labored hard and faithfully but to no avail. Among them was our beloved Rev. J. I. Kalp, now retired, and Rev. J. A. Berg.

The Glade Hills Church was not far from Butler, located along present Route 8. They were a small group, unable to support a minister. It was supplied for a number of years by a minister no other church would accept and died of neglect.

The Mt. Union Church noted as the home of the Updegraph family met its demise largely through deaths and removals. Faithful efforts to rebuild it have not succeeded. Present change in conditions in the immediate community hold some little hope for its future.

Jefferson County

My first pastorate included Coolspring, Emerickville and Rathmel. Grange was added the second year. Coolspring was the leading church of the circuit and I lived there. It was of about equal strength with the other two churches of the village; Presbyterian and the United Evangelicals. It was in good standing in the community. Some years later, their minister had an altercation with a number of the leading members and without any action of the Church Board, he expelled all those whom he disliked including most of the leaders of the church. The church never recovered from that blow.

The church in Rathmel was about ten miles east of Emerickville. There were only a few members when I served it and the attendance was small. There was only one home where I was given meals or lodging, a Mr. Harris. It was dropped at the beginning of my second year there and Grange added to its place. But before my leaving home I remember well two young men that church sent to Barkeyville Academy to prepare for the ministry. One was Herbert Dyke who was ordained by the West Pennsylvania Eldership but later went to the Christian & Missionary Alliance with some others. The other was Joshua Batson. His preaching career was brief. At home on vacation he was scheduled to preach his first sermon in his home church. His sermon was to deal with the life of Jacob. In his introduction, he said, "Jacob had twelve sons and they were all boys". Noticing his blunder, he was so embarrassed that he just turned and sat down. That was the end of his preaching career.

Fayette County

The Mill Run Church of God was a few miles south of the village of Mill Run. The church was extinct when I came to Indian Head but I had a funeral in the old building when one of the old members of the church died, a Mrs. Ohler. Her son, who lived in Connellsville, called me for the service. I think the building was later torn down and rebuilt at Clinton for their first church house. They had been worshipping in a schoolhouse.

The Hillview Church was about three miles from Indian Head, up in the mountains. The membership was scattered widely over the hills, but attended well during my ministry. I had a very good revival there. Their building was destroyed by a woods fire and they were unable to rebuild. From that church the Eldership received two ministers; Walter Exline and Joe Hull.

The Liberty Church was in the village of Vanderbilt, just across the river from Dawson. It was a strong working church for many years, fully self-supporting. I attended several Elderships and Conventions held in their Bethel. It died from internal strife.

Maple Summit is on top of the mountains, a very difficult place to reach. It had been on the Ursina Circuit for many years. I think the building still stands.

I think one other small church on that circuit has been dropped; Union Bethel.

Armstrong County

The Widnoon Church was located in a small group of houses just up over the river hill from Mahoning. It was assigned to me, along with Templeton, Limestone and Mount Hope. I visited the place and found the building rather dilapidated with no heating system. They had not had any services for some time and no money for repairs. There seemed to be but one dependable family, Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Gray. They had abandoned all hope for the church. I later had a baptismal service near there. The pastor of the Reformed Church was taking in a group of members and some five or six of them, evidently from Church of God descent, demanded baptism by immersion before joining the church. The pastor contacted me saying he was fully accredited to baptize that way but had never seen it done and asked me to baptize them for him, which I gladly did.

There was a Schoolhouse appointment about five miles east of Templeton in the Cochran Schoolhouse. I preached there every two weeks on Thursday nights. The Schoolhouse was usually filled. I held a meeting there with several conversions. Several families from the Templeton Church lived in that community but did not go to Templeton as it was too far. Among them were the Sol Peterson family, Ferman Fox, the Bowser family, the widow Sourwine and Giles Coningham.

Beaver and Lawrence Counties

When Wm. Harris Guyer served the Lillyville Circuit there was a fairly good church in Harmony. When I inquired about it, I was informed that it had "died from lack of harmony". My assignment to the Lillyville Circuit included Lillyville, Ellwood City, Belton and New Castle Mission. I have already discussed the Ellwood City Church. The Belton Church was located just a little ways down the river from Park Gate, which is the west end of Ellwood City. In my visit to them, I found their building in bad repair with the stoves worn out and they did not seem to have any desire to change conditions. They had not had services lately. They seemed to have reached the end of the road.

The New Castle Mission was located on Wilson Avenue in the east end of the city, not far from Cascade Park. It was a community building but we had sole use of it. Most of the members lived close to the Mission but a few were scattered widely across the city. I reached it by trolley from Ellwood City. At that time the Harmony Line connected New Castle with Ellwood City, Harmony and Pittsburgh, with a branch line from Harmony to Butler. Cars ran every hour each way. We had a number of converts and additions to the church during my pastorate. We also took an option on

a large piece of ground along Washington Street (east). It was a three-cornered plot with a deep ravine through it. It was owned by the Stone Company which had a tramway through it. They were removing the tramway and agreed to fill the ravine free with stone and dirt from their works. The price was \$100. I appointed one of our members to receive contributions and gave him money several times. It was my hope to have the Mission pay for the property then ask the Eldership to build the church. But after I left nothing was done. There is now a lovely big church standing on that lot. I do not know what denomination it is. I do not know when or why the New Castle Mission was abandoned.

One of the great heartaches for many of us was the decline and closing of the Pittsburgh Church. It had been a prosperous church for many years, with its members scattered most over all the city. There were many things that entered into its decline. It was not from lack of competent pastors, for it had many of our best. Transportation became one problem as many had to pay several car fares to reach it. Deaths and removals also cut into it. It became almost impossible for members to bring their neighbors and friends from distant parts of the city and the local community was not the type of people attracted by our church. Most of them were Catholic, I understand. It was our second attempt in the big city. The first church had been located in the downtown business district on Townsend Street, not far from the steel mill along the Monongahela River. I remember being in it when quite small. It had basement apartments. Two of my sisters occupied one of these apartments and we visited them. Dr. S. G. Yahn was then its pastor, later going to Mount Pleasant, then becoming Editor of the Church Advocate. When the property there was sold, some of the money was used to build the Barkeyville Academy buildings.

The Bolivar Church was located not far from Indiana, Pa. I do not know much about it but remember well of it being served for a number of years by Rev. R. B. Bowser.

I have already discussed the Sharon Church under the heading of Slovak Missions.

CHAPTER 6 - REVIVALS

One of the notable things about the early days was the revivals. There were different names applied to these, vis. - Revivals, Big Meetings, Protracted Meetings, etc. Each of these names were significant. They were big in attendance. The most neglectful members of the church and most everybody for miles around attended these meetings. They were protracted, unlimited as to time. Often running four to six weeks. They were intended to "revive" the church; and many, if not all, the members needed reviving. Many had grown cold and indifferent, some had fully backslidden. A certain pastor was quoted as saying, "My church believes in backsliding and they practice it." A special effort was put forth to reclaim all such persons. It was also evangelistic, a real effort to reach the unsaved in the community. Since the unsaved came to the services, a large part of the effort was put forth in that direction. During the altar service, the pastor and many of the workers would mingle with the audience seeking out friends and neighbors and pleading with them to come to Christ. A large majority of the converts were won in that way. Personal work was also extended to visiting

the unsaved in their homes. Preaching in those days was not as mild and consoling as it is today. Much of it might well be designated as "Hell Fire and Damnation". Preachers tried to present the sins of the people in their true hideousness, warning the people that "Sin, when it is finished, is death". The call was to repent and escape the wrath of God. As a result men were deeply convicted of sin and cried out to God for mercy and forgiveness. Many came to the altar, crying, and pleading for God's mercy. Conviction was deep and the burden of sin was heavy. When God forgave their sins and took away their burden, there was real joy. It was a most inspiring sight to see the convert's face light up with true joy and to hear their testimony as to what God had done for them. Some even shouted for joy. Yes, these meetings were 'emotional'. When the souls of men are deeply moved, their emotions are affected likewise.

Preaching has changed since those days. Sin is touched upon but lightly. One seldom hears a call to repent. The wrath of God is forgotten. The theme today is God's Love. People are urged to accept God's love and to give themselves to Him. People coming smiling to the altar, or front seats, in answer to the new Gospel call. Perhaps it is a better way, we are not the judges. If they truly accept Christ, and He accepts them, the work of Grace is done. There is no stereotyped way of salvation. I remember in one of my revival meetings an unsaved man rose in the audience and said, "Friends, I read in the Bible where it says, 'If any man confess me before men, I will confess him before my Father and the angels'", and raising his hand high above his head, he said, "I here and now confess Christ as my Saviour." That was unusual but orthodox. I later fellowshiped him into the church and baptized him and he became a good worker in the church, serving as Elder and Sunday School Superintendent. "God works in diverse ways His wonders to perform."

CHAPTER 7 - FINANCIAL CONDITION

In my introduction I commented on the immense changes that have taken place during the seventy years I have been in the Eldership. Practically every phase of human life has undergone radical changes. Looking back over the years, one is amazed at what has been accomplished in so few years. These changes have been evidenced as much, or more, in the financial conditions as in any other phase of life.

New inventions have required new shops and manufacturing plants, which in turn have made more jobs and increased wages. The progress has been gradual and for the most part, taken for granted. But looking back over the years the sum total is seen to be amazing.

In my early years, my salary was very small as was that of my contemporaries. But past salaries should not be judged in contrast with those of today. Rather they should be judged with the income of workmen in other trades at that time. From that standpoint, we were about as well off as those around us.

The church members in those early days were not stingy. They just did not have the money. I believe that what they did give was a much greater sacrifice for them than what folks make today with their big contributions. Many of them were like the widow Jesus observed in the

temple. They gave all they had. Jobs were scarce and wages very low. A fully competent mechanic only received three dollars for a ten-hour day. Common labor was much lower. My first work among neighbors as a young man was for seventy-five cents for a ten-hour day. My first public work was helping dig the ditches for the water line and sanitary sewer in Grove City. We received one dollar and a quarter for a ten-hour day and we have to work very hard to keep the job. Seven dollars and a half for a six-day week. But prices were lower. I got my room and board and rough washing for three dollars a week. Nobody was making big money. I also worked as a paddy on the Bessemer Railroad for the same wages. Yes, prices were low. I remember my mother sold eggs for six to eight cents a dozen. Butter was eight to ten cents a pound. With her butter and egg money she bought our groceries and most of the household needs.

Few of our ministers in those early days had a fixed salary. Our income was usually the collection taken after we preached. The deacons would count it for their record then give it to us. We often went home with a pocket full of change; dimes, nickels, but mostly pennies. Not much of a total. Occasionally the deacons would call on the members who did not attend regularly to receive their contributions and pass it on to us the following Sunday. But it was never large. Those not interested enough to attend did not care enough to contribute much money.

Sometimes those of us who were receiving from four hundred to six hundred a year were tempted to envy Rev. S. G. Yahn who at that time was pastor at Mount Pleasant. He had a real salary - one thousand dollars a year and parsonage.

With the building of manufacturing plants, working conditions improved and wages increased. Our salaries advanced with other conditions. But there were times of depression when public works were partially or wholly shut down. When men were out of work they could not pay and we suffered with the rest. My last year at New Brighton was in just such a time. Most of the men were without work. Those who had jobs only got two or three days a week. I think I received about four hundred dollars that year, with a family of four children to feed and clothe. I tried to get work, and did get a couple days carpenter work, but never got paid for it. One young man of the congregation who was unable to find work acutally made corn mush and peddled it from house to house trying to earn a few pennies with which to feed his family. Several times when he had some he could not sell, he brought it to the parsonage and gave it to us as his contribution to our living. He gave it with good grace and we accepted it in the same spirit, even though it was only corn mush.

When we look back over these things, we should be very grateful for the modern conveniences and excellent advantages we now enjoy. But man is never satisfied. "Three things are never satisfied. Four never say "enough": Sheol, the barren womb, the ever thirsty earth and the fire which never says, enough." (Proverbs 30:15,16) We might well add, "And man" as a fifth one.

NOTE: The largest salary received during my fifty-four years of preaching was \$1,800.

CHAPTER 8 - BARKEYVILLE ACADEMY

The Barkeyville Academy was an early project of the West Pennsylvania Eldership. It was started by Rev. J. R. H. Latchaw. The construction of buildings were largely financed by using the proceeds of the sale of the former Church of God property in Pittsburgh located in the downtown section on Townsend Avenue. It consisted of two buildings. The school building was located on a lot adjoining the church in Barkeyville and contained five class rooms on the first floor, a large chapel and library on the second floor. It was heated entirely by coal stoves, a stove being located in each room.

The dormitory, or Boarding House as it was then called, was across a field from the school building and was three stories high. The first floor contained living quarters for the Professor who supervised it, a large dining room and kitchen and a reception room which could also be used as a study room. The second floor was the girls quarters and the men occupied the third floor. The supervising professor kept a strict control and no visiting was permitted between occupants of the second and third floors. A few of the roomers did their own cooking in their rooms but most of them ate in the dining room on the first floor. Quite a number of students had rooms in private houses in the village but the larger proportion of students lived throughout the community and traveled from home to classes. Between classes these spent their study periods in the chapel or library.

The chapel was also used for literary purposes. There was a "Literary Society" to which all students were supposed to belong. It met regularly once a month with a full evening program in which every student was to take part in their turns, as appointed by a Special Program Committee. The program consisted of recitations, readings, debates, essays, music and usually a paper, which was mostly puns and jokes. A faculty member was always present as Advisor or Critic. At the close of the program this critic reviewed the various parts of the program and pointed out any errors in language, rhetoric or delivery. It was a very helpful training in public speaking. Once a year a play was put on by the students and held in the chapel.

While the student body was drawn mostly from the adjoining community, many came from quite a distance. Quite a number came from East Pennsylvania. I remember two young men who came from Buda, Illinois, and quite a few from other churches in West Pennsylvania. A large number were preparing for the teaching profession and at least two of the graduates later served as County Superintendents of Venango County Schools and one as President of Edinboro State College. There were also quite a number of men preparing for the ministry. From East Pennsylvania there were at least two who later became noted leaders: Dr. W. N. Yates and Dr. C. H. Grove, who for many years edited our Church Literature. Graduates who later served churches in West Pennsylvania were: George W. Davis, George W. Byrnes, Dr. Wm. Harris Guyer, Sylvester Fulmer, Ira Eakin, J. L. Updegraph and myself. Entering the minister of other denominations were: Brad Hummel and John Shelley - Presbyterians; Harry Yard - United Evangelicals; and Dave Martin, Methodist. Herbert Dyke and Earl Carner also Church of God.

Graduates from the Academy found their way into most all leading professions. Its valued service can never be fully expressed. There were

several courses offered. Classical, Latin Scientific, one especially for prospective teachers, and music. Each was a four-year course. A jeweler in Pittsburgh, Mr. Harding, supplied the gold class pins for a nominal price, and in exchange for that business gave free the silver medal for the Valedictorian with the individual's name carved on it. (I received mine in June 1899).

Between the academy building and the boarding hall was a field, perhaps ten acres, belonging to Abraham Hunsberger, a leading member of the church, who owned much land and the village store. He permitted the school to use this field as an athletic field. For a while there was a small gymnasium on it. The Academy always boasted of a baseball team. I played on it during my student days. During World War I, one of the faculty was a member of the National Guard. He grouped a number of us boys as Cadets and trained on the athletic field. Many of the villagers came as spectators when we were drilling. One day an old veteran of the Civil War was standing on the side line watching us. The commander suggested that we have a joke on this veteran so he had us march over in his direction; and when near, ordered, "Charge". As several boys rushed in, the old veteran held his ground and when they were close enough, he issued his own order, "Take prisoners", and grabbed two of the boys by the collar. That joke had backfired but everybody seemed to enjoy it.

The rapidly rising State Normals, later State Colleges, took over the work of the academies and they had to close. Their work was done, and done well.