

HISTORY

— OF THE —

FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

— OF THE —

CITY OF LANCASTER, PA.,

— FROM —

1807 to 1893.

WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF EARLIER EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH
METHODISM IN LANCASTER.

— ALSO AN —

APPENDIX

CONTAINING A SKETCH OF ST. PAUL'S M. E. CHURCH, BY THE
PASTOR, AND "CONESTOGA'S" NOTES ON THE
CONFERENCE OF 1855.

— BY —

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THE SUNDAY-SCHOOLS

OF THE

FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF LANCASTER PA.

IN the sketch written by John B. Good, Esq., to which frequent reference is made in the former part of this history, it is said the Sunday-school dates from August 3d, 1828. On that day a meeting was held and a "resolution adopted that Henry Boehm," then preacher in charge of the circuit, "be chosen chairman, and E. A. Atlee, secretary. A constitution was prepared, read and adopted," and from that time "the Sunday-school has had an uninterrupted existence."

The first official mention of the Sunday-school is in the minutes of the Quarterly Conference held February 7th, 1842. Dallas D. Lore, then pastor, reported that there were "two schools. Connected with the first there are 20 teachers and about 100 scholars. The school is in a prosperous condition. The second has just been commenced, and has about 35 scholars. This, also, promises much fruit for the labor."

The next mention is in the record of the proceedings of the trustees under the date of August 21st, 1842, as follows:

“The Sabbath-school was granted the privilege of constructing the seats in the basement story to suit their own convenience, they paying all expenses for the same, and having the right to sell the old benches of the church.”

In 1845 the pastor, W. A. Wiggins, found it necessary to ask the Quarterly Conference to appoint a committee of three “to confer with the officers of the Library and Sunday-school Association, whose duty it shall be to examine the present constitution of said Association, and to prepare a constitution to be submitted at the next meeting of the Quarterly Conference.” At the same time “Brother N. S. Pinkerton was appointed superintendent of the Sabbath-school for the ensuing three months.”

The second school mentioned in the report of D. D. Lore did not yield the fruit which he so confidently expected, and ceased to be reported.

The school of the First Church reported 175 scholars before the close of 1845.

In September, 1847, the pastor, William Urie, reported the school in a flourishing condition and the interest increasing.

In July, 1848, “Brother William Murray, superintendent of the Sabbath-school, reported that there are at present 78 male and 95 female scholars receiving instructions, and the number is rapidly on the increase. Brother George M. Clawges, superintendent of the Sabbath-school in the southern section of the city, reported that there are 8 teachers

and 52 children, male and female, to whom the usual instructions are given."

This second school had at that time been but recently organized and was held in a small frame house on the west side of South Queen street, opposite the ground now occupied by the Woodward Hill Cemetery.

At a special meeting of the trustees of the First M. E. Church held on the 16th of February, 1849, at the request of the pastor, William Urie, the difficulties under which the school in the southern section of the city labored were presented and carefully considered. The pastor stated that he "had received subscriptions to the amount of \$422.00 to be applied to the erection of a house for Sabbath-school and other religious purposes. He further had the offer of a piece of ground from Brother John Beam," fronting on German street, for the sum of \$240.00. A committee was appointed to examine the lot, and if they "deem proper purchase the same, receive the deed, and take such other steps as they may think right and proper and report at a special meeting" to be held on the next Monday.

The report of this Committee and the subsequent action of the trustees are mentioned elsewhere.*

On the second Sunday after the dedication of the

*For further reference to this lot, the building erected on it and its transfer to the Second Church, afterwards St. Paul's. See pp. 58, 59, 60, 61.

new building on German street the Sunday-school was reorganized. It was then under the superintendency of James Geidner.

At the Quarterly Conference held December 8d, 1849, the pastor, James McCarter, reported this school as "large and prosperous. Success will no doubt crown the efforts of its devoted friends."

The school connected with the First Church was not prospering, owing, as the pastor thought, to the absence of the superintendent, who was suffering severe affliction at that time.

At the Quarterly Conference held September 9th, 1850, the pastor and Sabbath-school committee were directed "to apply a constitutional and Methodistical corrective to the declining state of the school." What the cause of the decline was and how the corrective was applied are questions which the records do not attempt to answer.

On March 30th, 1851, a report was presented which contained full statistics of both schools, and is interesting as showing the strength of the schools at the time of the organization of the Second Methodist Episcopal Church in Lancaster, afterwards and still known as St. Paul's.

The school attached * to the First Church, had as follows: Officers and teachers 32; scholars 200; vol-

*This word "attached" is used in the report doubtless for the reason that at that time the people did not recognize the Sunday-school as a department of the church—a recognition now almost universal.

umes in the library 1000; Bible class 1; scholars in the infant class 50. The expenses of the schools for the year were \$55.50. The number of conversions during the year was two. The number of Sunday-school Advocates taken was 90.

The school on German street was called the Second Wesleyan Methodist Episcopal Sunday-school, and had officers and teachers 28; scholars 280, with an average attendance of about 100; volumes in the library 511. The expenses of the school for the year were \$60. The number of Sunday-school advocates taken was 80.

On the 21st of May, 1854, a Sunday-school was organized in a frame building belonging to Jacob N. Miller, on East King street, near Plum. William Murray was the first superintendent, and in his first report presented to the Quarterly Conference in November, 1854, he had eight teachers and forty-five scholars. This school increased in numbers and interest until December, 1859, when it was removed to a public school building which stood on the corner of East Orange street and Sherman and which the School Board of the city permitted it to occupy.

While this room answered very well the purposes of the Sunday-school a growing desire for an enlargement of their work led the officers and teachers to ask the aid of the church in securing a place in which not only the school might be accommodated, but regular church services conducted. This resulted in the purchase by the First Church in 1870, of the

lot on East King street, and the erection of the building now occupied by the school under the name of the East King Street Methodist Episcopal Sunday-school, which is a part of the charge of the pastor of the First Church.

The superintendents of this school have been William Murray, who served from the organization in 1854 until August, 1858, about which time he removed to Williamsport, Penna.; James Black, who served from 1858 to 1884, or a continuous period of more than twenty-five years; Robert McGaw, who served from 1884 to 1886, and Daniel B. Weaver, who served from 1886 to 1888. Moses Hollinger is the superintendent in 1893, having served since 1888.

In the year 1859 James Potts, Amos Row, Joseph H. Selvert, Dr. J. T. Baker and others, representing a Young Men's Mission Association, organized a Sunday-school on Dorwart street near West King street. The building in which the school was held was owned by Jeremiah Campbell, who granted the use of it without charge. The school continued, with fluctuating success, until early in 1867, when it was abandoned. James Potts was the first and only superintendent.

The Young Men's Christian Brotherhood was formed on April 1st, 1867. On the 16th of June, 1867, they organized a Sunday-school on Charlotte street near Lemon street. They gave it the name of "The Centenary Mission," but after the purchase of the building it became widely known as "The

West Mission." For a time it was called "The Third Methodist Episcopal Sunday-school," but The West Mission came to be recognized as its true title and continued until the organization of The Western Methodist Episcopal Church of Lancaster. The development of this work is traced more fully in the record covering the years from 1867 to 1889. The superintendents of this school were as follows:

- 1867-1870. Amos Row.
- 1870-1876. Joseph H. Selvert.
- 1876-1881. Elim G. Snyder.
- 1881-1883. J. L. Withrow.
- 1883-1884. James M. Duncan.
- 1884-1886. William E. Barton.
- 1886-1887. James E. Crawford.
- 1887-1889. William E. Barton.

It is exceedingly difficult to give a list of the superintendents of The First Methodist Episcopal Sunday-school, owing to the meagre records kept in the earlier periods of the school's history. There is no record from 1828 to 1835. In 1836 George B. Kerfoot was superintendent; from 1842 to 1845 Levi J. Rhoads; in September, 1845, N. S. Pinkerton was appointed by the Quarterly Conference to serve as superintendent for three months. There is no record after that until July, 1847, when M. M. Moore was elected superintendent. He served until 1848.

The superintendents since that time were as follows :

1848-1850. William Murray.

1850-1851. Lewis Paulick.

1851-1852. Carpenter McCleery.

1852-1853. The pastor, Pennell Coombe.

1853-1854. John Amer.

1854-1856. James Black.

1856-1859. Benjamin F. Shenk.

1859-1861. David Paul Brown.

1861-1870. Benjamin F. Shenk.

1870-1876. E. Lane Schofield, M. D.

1876-1879. Lemuel C. Eby.

1879-1883. Benjamin F. Shaub, Ph. D.

1883-1884. Benjamin F. Shenk.

1884-1892. James L. Withrow, D. D. S.

The last named has been elected for 1898, and is the incumbent of the office.