

**EARLY RELIGION
WAS EMOTIONAL
HISTORY RELATES**

Religious Fervor Was Great In
Days Of Circuit-Riders And
First Pastors

Nathan H. Power's history of the Methodist Church read during the recent Centennial celebration, is continued this week. The portion printed last week concluded with a description of the life of early ministers.

From that point it proceeds as follows:

As before stated, in 1878 extensive repairs were made on the church building, and it was thought proper to celebrate the event. All entered into the spirit of the occasion and made plans to make it a success. Dedication day came and it poured rain. The roads were deep in mud. Quite a large number of former pastores came in horse-drawn vehicles, the only method of transportation at that time. The speaker of the day was to be Bishop Ninde. He was coming from Detroit, about a four hour's drive. He was to preach at 10:30, and a large congregation awaited him. Never before had the Church entertained a Bishop, and there was a great desire to hear one, so high the emotions of the Methodist body. Ten-thirty came, the clock came and no Bishop. Hymns were sung to while away the time. Finally the presiding Elder, J. M. Fuller, said it was evident that the Bishop was not coming. He was very sorry. The congregation had come to hear a sermon and he did not want to disappoint them and he was going to ask one of the preachers present to preach to them, and he knew that the one he asked would not decline.

Now, this to the average man would be a difficult thing to do—stand before a large congregation and take the place of the Bishop, and without any time to prepare a sermon or to collect his thoughts. Susting the action to his word, he called the Rev. Thomas Stalker to the pulpit. Without any seeming embarrassment or hesitation he chose his text and preached a masterly sermon. I have always thought the Divine Spirit came directly to his aid for he seemed to touch the souls of his hearers and they gave him rapt attention. In the evening Bishop Ninde was there and preached. I, in common with others heard both sermons and I have always thought the one preached by Stalker, the most satisfying and inspiring.

Music In Church

In those days music then as now took a prominent part in the Church service. A great deal of pleasure was taken and much satisfaction experienced in singing the good old-fashioned music of the church accompanied by the organ. But the older members especially, drew the line on the kind of musical instrument used to aid in the singing, so one Sunday when word came that Con Hoffman, noted violin player, had become a member of the Methodist Church choir at Pontiac and actually played 'on his fiddle' at the regular Church service on Sunday, much indignation was expressed.

Was not that instrument the most used at dances and was not the dance the invention of

BANQUET SPEAKER



Prosecuting Attorney Norman C. Orr will be one of the speakers at the Grand River Banquet at West Point Park, given in honor of the West Point Park team's winning of the 1929 league championship.

The Devil himself and now the chief instrument of his satanic majesty had made its appearance in a Methodist church! Surely the Church at Pontiac was doomed to destruction. But at least 50 years have come and gone and instead of one church at Pontiac there are two or more Methodist churches in a flourishing condition in spite of Con Hoffman and his fiddle.

It was the day of revivals and the traveling revivalist. While the goodness and mercy of God inspired many a sermon the need of repentance and new birth on the part of the sinner was stressed as the one thing vital to the salvation of the soul. A never-ending Hell of torture was the fate of the unrepentant sinner.

I remember a sermon by Rev. D. J. Pfeifer in which he preached an everlasting Hell of fire and brimstone for the unsaved. In telling about his visit here he said, "I shook my bimstone bag over that congregation." No doubt there were some who benefited by this doctrine, professed conversion, joined the Church and lived consistent Christian lives ever afterward.

Emotional Religion

In those days emotion had a much greater part in the religious life than it does now. Religion was something that gave joy to life. It was something felt and experienced. At the average church service many people while prayer was offered. The southeast corner of the old Church was called "the Amen corner." A group of elderly men usually occupied it and many an audience member fervently "Amen"ed from their lips when the preacher made some telling point against the wickedness of the day or described in glowing words the goodness of God and the joy and happiness of the saved as they gathered around the throne in their home in Heaven.

The sermon of the morning was one hour long and was followed immediately by the class meeting. At this meeting those who attended told of their troubles and temptations during the week that had passed, sometimes of their particular besetting sin and of the power of the Holy Spirit in prayer that gave them victory over all temptation. It was a happy time and one of real

benefit to all that took part in it. The class meeting is a thing of the past, but I think it was an institution that the Church could ill afford to lose.

In those days the salary of the preacher was pitifully small and out of the annual "donation" held usually in the late fall at the parsonage in the evening, it was well attended by the members and friends of the Church. The farmers brought apples, beans, potatoes, pork, beef, chickens and most of the household provisions that the minister had need of usually in generous quantities. Money was given freely in generous quantities.

Sometimes \$100 in cash was realized. In 1870 during the pastorate of R. S. Pardington, a man beloved by his people, the amount was \$240 which would not be a bad sum for even our day.

A Social Event

It was a social event of importance. While the older ones visited, the younger people played games like "Whirl the Platner," "Span and catch 'em and then kiss them," etc. Many a farmer boy got the thrill of his life when after an exciting and suspenseful game his lips came in contact with hers. What pleasant memories come to mind even now!

A fine supply of roast turkey, fried chicken, duck, pickles, cake, mince pie, apple and pumpkin pie, cheese and other delicious delicacies were served. "The donation" has gone but what pleasant recollections it brings of the days when life was still ahead and its illusions were not dispelled.

Through the kindness of Rev. S. D. Eva I have the names of all the Pastors in chronological order that served the Farmington Church since 1856, in which year the Detroit Conference was organized. Previous to that year I can not give them in order or all of them. We know that Baughman, Whitney, North Watson, Jacobs, W. H. Collins and others were here preaching the word of God to the struggling Methodist Church in the pioneer settlement in the woods.

Most of the men that served so faithfully, often under adverse conditions that must have tried their souls, have gone to their reward, and are long since forgotten. As far as I know, none of them labored to build up the cause of righteousness and extend the Kingdom of their Master. Some of them like Squire E. Warren, W. C. Way, R. S. Pardington, J. A. McIlwain, C. E. Allen, S. W. Horner and S. D. Eva made a lasting impression upon the community for valiant and efficient work accomplished during their pastorate.

A faithful band were the members of this Church who heard these men preach and who listened to their words of consolation and comfort, when the waves of trouble and affliction swept over their souls. How well I remember some of them, though long years have intervened since they passed on. William S. Beach, who I as a small boy saw in the Sunday School where he was librarian for a period of years, faithful in attendance, never doubting, willing to counsel an erring brother. Two of his sons served in the Civil War, and one of them, Marshall, made the supreme sacrifice in the dark days of 1863. His surviving daughter, Miss Addie Beach, still lives in the vicinity. His neighbor, Joseph Horton, secretary of the Official Board, for long years, a man up and doing, prompt in all he did, nervous, energetic, a successful farmer, liberal in his support of the Church. He too sent a son to the Civil War and also gave one, Jacob, to the Ministry, he being one of two sent from this Church.

Jacob Horton served some of the strong churches in the Michigan Conference and was honored and loved by his associates in that body. John Thayer, also owner of a fine farm and successful at his vocation, was a member of the original class formed in 1829. His delight was in the Church. He was a faithful and honored member. He, too, gave his life to the cause of freedom in the Civil War. His son John and his daughter, Mrs. Parsons, together with Mrs. Anna Cook, his grand-daughter are residents of our city.

(To be continued next week)

FIRST CONVICTED FOR HUNTING WHILE DRUNK

Three men, the first to be convicted in Michigan under the "drunken hunting" ruling, are serving terms ranging from 15 to 30 days each in the Clare County jail.

The men were arrested by sheriff's officers and state police near Tempem and were charged with having fire arms in their possession while intoxicated.

SCHOOL BOARD ISSUES

A Reply To Petition

(Continued from page one) the school children of said territory to attend the school nearest their homes.

2. Children living in said territory north of Grand River, will not thereafter be required to cross heavy traffic roadways, namely Grand River Avenue and Eight Mile Road.

3. Children living north of Grand River can be transported to school in the school buses of Redford Union Schools District No. 1 and will avoid crossing said roadways on foot.

4. The ninth grade of Junior High School will then be available for said children.

5. Time will be saved for those parents who are required to take children to school, especially in weather.

E. Holtzclaw, 642 Seminole, Jessie Holtzclaw, 642 Seminole, Earl A. Shelman, 634 Seminole, Ross Shelman, 634 Seminole, Cora Shelman, 634 Seminole, Vera Graves, 537 Ponciana, Richard Graves, 537 Ponciana, Herman Edwards, 892 Miami, Nellie Edwards, 892 Miami, George Roy, 313 Negaunee.

Amelia Roy, 313 Negaunee, Minnie Ehlenbach, 314 Negaunee, William Ehlenbach, 314 Negaunee, Irene Troy, 357 Negaunee, V. A. Liley, 404 Ponciana, C. E. Shelman, 642 Seminole, Mary Shelman, 642 Seminole, N. R. Norris, 635 Seminole.

school; nor will it increase educational facility or opportunity for children living in effected portion of district; nor will it provide or make possible a lower tax rate for property owners located in portion of district affected. The Board, however, in their deliberations find that greater benefit will be obtained by the people living in that portion of the district affected by the petition by remaining in the said district through the lower school tax rate now prevailing in District No. 5 Frac., Farmington Township; through the use of the new school bus which the Board has contracted for; through the location of the Edgewood School for the children living north of Grand River Avenue and the additional school facilities offered by District No. 5 Frac., Farmington Township, in which Redford Union Schools at this time does not offer, namely the addition of the 10th grade.

If the petitioners and all of the qualified electors living in that portion of the district affected by the petition care to discuss this matter with Board of Education of School District No. 5 Frac., a meeting can easily be arranged by petitioners through the office of the secretary of said Board.

F. W. LAHR, Sec.

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