

Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory

ID: 126

Name: Potomac United Methodist ~~Ch~~ Church Cemetery

Alternate name: ~~early~~ Cabin ~~Methodist~~ John Presbyterian Church Cemetery

Address: Falls Rd
10300

Town: Potomac

ADC Map Page 34 Grid D-4

Type

Religious
 Family
 Private
 Other

Association

Free black
 Enslaved
 Ethnic
 Prehistoric

Setting Rural Urban Suburban Forested Other

Condition Excellent Good Fair Poor

Negative Impacts (vandalism, dumping, neglect, encroachment, etc)

Approximate no. of burials 1200+ + Date range of burials 1790's - 2004 present

Description (markers, materials, arrangement, landscaping, fence, paths and roads, etc.)

*Lighted Asphalt pathways - trees, shrubs, all grass sections
boxwoods, etc.*

Scatter garden

These paths were originally unpaved. Very well kept.

Surveyor(s) Anne & Janet

Photographer Anne

Survey date 11-7-2004

Date 11-7-2004 Photo no. _____

Current owner _____

Address/Phone No. _____

Historic Status

Locational Atlas ID
 Master Plan ID

National Register
 Other

UTM POTOMACUMC

Additional sources of information: _____

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POTOMAC UMC CEMETERY
10300 FALLS ROAD
POTOMAC

Joins Map 28

750,000 FT 8 NW



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POTOMAC UMC CEMETERY
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**POTOMAC UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CEMETERY (POTOMAC
CHAPEL METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, CAPTAIN JOHN'S
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH)**

Directions: Route 189 South, Falls Road, church and cemetery on right. [A.D.C. Map: Montgomery, page 31, grid coordinates B-11.] **Condition of cemetery:** Well kept. Active cemetery. **Earliest known death:** 1793. **Most recent death:** Present. **Veterans interred:** WWI and WWII vets. In 1936, 4 record volumes, 1858-1905, Rockville Circuit, 3 volumes, 1908-1937, Potomac Circuit. **Location of burial records:** Church office. **Date transcribed:** 1982. **Location of transcribed records:** Montgomery County Historical Society Library, 42 West Middle Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20850. **Author:** J. Thomas Scharf, A.M. **Title:** *History of Western Maryland*, pages 787 and 788, Vol. I. **Publisher:** Regional Publishing Company [reprinted 1968], Baltimore, MD [originally printed in Philadelphia, 1882]. **Comments:** Over 1050 marked graves, church organized 1844.

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O N H O L Y G R O U N D

A Church History: 1716 - 1989

by Ann Paterson Harris



POTOMAC UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 9908 South Glen Road at Falls Road
 Potomac, Maryland 20854
 301-299-9383

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HISTORIC POTOMAC UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Since 1716 when the Presbyterians built a meeting house here on the Great Falls Road, through the years from 1854 when the Methodists acquired the land and built a chapel, this land has been a site of Christian faith and focus for the people of the greater Potomac area.

- 1716 Captain John Meetinghouse built by the Presbyterians
- 1760 Tusculum Academy established on the minister's farm.
- 1793 Rev. James Hunt, minister during the Revolutionary War, interred with his wife, Ruth, in the cemetery.
- 1854 Methodists acquire the land from the Claggett family and build a chapel.
- 1865 Potomac Chapel School, one of the first free public schools in the county, built adjacent to the chapel.
- 1969 The present Georgian Colonial Church built.
- 1989 Dedication of the DAR Historical plaque
Beautification and Rededication of the Potomac Church Cemetery
Dedication of the Claire M. Kitchen Memorial Garden



Two of the earliest remaining gravestones of original Presbyterian Church, the site of the present Potomac Methodist Church

from an original sketch by Renée I. Beard-Gunkel

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ON HOLY GROUND

A Church History: 1716-1989

Through all Potomac's changing years, one special bit of earth has remained dedicated to Christian service. The Potomac United Methodist Church stands on ground first consecrated when Presbyterians established the Captain John Meetinghouse here in 1716.

In this humble log Meetinghouse and later in the Methodist quaint Potomac Chapel, early settlers found their church home. Here they came to recite Sunday School lessons, sing hymns, hear sermons, offer prayer, marry their sweethearts and baptize the children. When their earthly days were over, they found a final resting place under the towering trees and flowering shrubs of the surrounding cemetery.

Modern technology brings a different world, but old customs of church-going people remain in part unchanged and often are reflected in the traditions of today's Potomac United Methodist Church. It has long been a church that commemorates its historical past while reaching to the future in community service and spiritual growth. The present Georgian Colonial church was built by the Methodist congregation in 1969, replacing the old Potomac Chapel, which, in turn, had replaced the Meetinghouse in 1854.

To go back to the very beginning, the colony of Maryland was established by the Roman Catholic Lord Baltimore under the Protestant English king. An Act of Religious Toleration allowing freedom of worship for all those "professing to believe in Jesus Christ" was passed in 1647. At the start of the 18th century, a number of Presbyterians who had settled in Virginia were being persecuted for their refusal to attend services of the Episcopal Church of England. Maryland's Governor Stone invited the Presbyterians to relocate in this state and it was one of the first, Rev. Hugh Conn, who was the first recorded traveling preacher in the Potomac area.

Conn was said to have organized the Captain John Church, known as the Captain John Meetinghouse. The ministers of that era usually traveled through dense wilderness to serve several congregations and were called circuit riders. An article in the Daughters of American Revolution Library in Washington, D.C. states, "Ministers...went heavily armed and carried a flask of whiskey in their pocket, but when we think of the ride from here (Potomac) to Bladensburg on horseback...it seems only a part of the preparation."

"The church buildings of those days were about thirty feet long, constructed of lumber, roughly prepared, with not even a plank floor. At the lower end of the church was a gallery for servants." There were no choirs, organs or pianos in these modest places of worship. The words of the hymns were given out line by line by the minister "as few possessed hymn books, and some could not have read them."

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The small Captain John Meetinghouse was believed to have been made of logs and was erected on land given by Edward Offutt, one of the Offutt family from whom Potomac received its original name, "Offutt's Crossroads." The name, "Captain John" was apparently derived from that of a nearby tributary of Captain John's Run. Years later, the pronunciation of the words, "Captain John" became corrupted by local usage and evolved as "Cabin John." The captain referred to probably was Captain John Smith who explored the Potomac River almost as far as Great Falls in 1608.

The earliest minister to be supported by the congregation of Captain John, Rev. James Hunt, was also one of its most well known and accomplished. When Hunt accepted the call in 1769, he did so with the understanding he would divide his time between Captain John and the church at Bladensburg. Ten years later, Hunt bought 365 acres near the present Greentree Road and named his farm "Tusculum." He not only tended to the needs of two widely separated congregations but also established "Tusculum Academy," the first secondary school for young men in Montgomery County. He was described as a "man of cultivated mind, liberal study and philosophic temper." His pastorship was during a time of great change and high emotion. Many of the events leading to the American Revolution and later relating to the course of the war undoubtedly were discussed at the Meetinghouse. In 1778, Hunt was among those patriots attesting to their loyalty to the State of Maryland and disavowing allegiance to the King of England by signing an "Oath of Fidelity and Support."

The circumstances of Hunt's death are unknown, but at the time he had been living at "Tusculum" and preaching at Captain John. He and his wife, Ruth, died within a month of each other and are buried side by side in the cemetery of Potomac Church. The narrow arched stone markers may be seen on the north side of the building. The stones bear the following inscriptions:

IN MEMORY OF THE REV. JAMES HUNT

who departed this life the 2nd of June, 1793, aged 62 years. He was set apart to the work of the ministry early in life, in which he continued till death, laboring for the good of souls, and the glory of his Heavenly Master. "Be ye followers of me as I was of Christ Jesus. By grace ye are saved."

IN MEMORY OF MRS. RUTH HUNT

Wife to the Reverend James Hunt deceased who departed this life the 17th day of May 1793, age 67 years. She early in life devoted herself to the service of religion and continued (sic) THRSO a long life a bright example of Christian piety. She was a woman of sorrows and acquainted with grief Being the greater part of her days the subject of Affliction Which refined her as fire from dwelling in the mansions of the Holy and Blessed. I tried the strength of death at length and here lie underground But I shall rise above the skies when the last trump shall sound

Another period of great turmoil occurred when the new nati

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again took up arms against Great Britain in the War of 1812. Two of the ministers appointed to "supply" the pulpit at Captain John Meetinghouse on designated Sundays were personally involved with events of high drama. John Brackenridge, who had been named "supply pastor" for Captain John the same year he was appointed Chaplain of the United States Senate, 1811, was in Washington when the British invaded the Capitol. He was reported to have been "among the first to afford comforts and consolations to the wounded and otherwise afflicted prisoners. He prayed among enemies," according to Clark's The Spirit of Captain John. The Rev William Maffitt, the other supply pastor who also preached at churches in Virginia where he lived, was host to President Madison the first night he fled Washington. Dolly was to have met her husband at "Salona," Maffitt's estate, but was not able to get there.

Around 1830 the Presbyterian congregation began to drift away. Planting of wheat and tobacco had depleted the soil and many residents left to seek new land. During this period, the population increased in the young towns of Bethesda and Rockville and decreased in Offutt's Crossroads (Potomac). Services were discontinued in the Meetinghouse, the structure abandoned and the land reverted to the ownership of Oratio Clagett who maintained the surrounding farm.

In 1854 the Methodists built the Potomac Chapel on the site of the old Captain John Meetinghouse. Brothers Richard and Jeremiah Collins did the construction work on the simple frame building. Earliest records of church enrollment show membership totalling 42 persons in 1856: names included Pennefield, Offutt Willett, Bull, Creamer, Lynch, Kilgour and Collins.

History does indeed repeat itself, for the deed for the gift of land from Oratio and Margaret Clagett was dated 1866 and referred to the "Potomac Chapel now standing." This is reminiscent of the same phrase used in the Meetinghouse deed for the gift of land from Offutt in 1746. In both cases, the land was deeded after the building was constructed. The Potomac Chapel deed describes the land given "as a place of religious worship and for a burial ground or grave yard, and for other religious purposes" for the "exclusive use and benefit of the Society of Christians or Christian people usually called Methodists." Chapel trustees in 1866 were Edwin Wallace, Philip Stone, William Harrison, Montgomery Clagett, Henry Vanderhoof, Robert Davidson and Robert Connel.

Pastor during this period was Rev. Edwin Wallace, whose devotion to duty is commemorated on a marble plaque in today's church. A history compiled by Rev. John Davidson describes Wallace, the congregation and the appearance of the old Chapel.

"Brother Wallace ...lived down near Bethesda and each Sunday would regularly appear astride his horse. To such a man of God bad weather and worse roads meant but little when it was time to appear for worship and service.

"The worship services were attended with a great deal of enthusiasm and devotion by great crowds of people. It was no unusual in that day to hear hearty 'amens' from devote worshippers

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Davidson related that both men and women often came to church on horseback, the ladies seated sidesaddle. "For the purpose of their mounting and dismounting, a stump had been left formed into a step...In the very early days were few light conveyances such as buggies...They came to church by walking many weary miles, on horseback, in farm wagons, etc. After the Civil War many of the farmers bought used ambulances. Not until a later day did they even have the general use of buggies and the familiar surrey."

Rev. Davidson described the Chapel as having a "single aisle down the middle of the church, with rows of benches on either side. A large chandelier with six oil lamps lighted the main church room. Other oil lamps were stationed on the pulpit." There was a gallery in the rear.

Old church records reflect a divisive period in the Methodist Church during the middle of the 19th Century. The Baltimore Conference, of which Potomac was a part, met in Staunton, Virginia in 1861 at which time a committee was appointed to consider the church's stand on slavery. In 1861 the Baltimore Conference protested the General Conference's action on slavery and declared itself "independent of the General Conference but still part of the Methodist Episcopal Church." Unfortunately, available records do not state the nature of the General Conference stand. Maryland was a slave holding state. Many Montgomery County landowners held modest numbers of slaves, as evidenced in census reports and wills.

Although there were no battles fought in the area of Potomac or Offutt's Crossroads as it was then called, there were times when River Road was the route of Union troop movements and for a period early in the war several regiments were camped at nearby Great Falls. Cavalry probably passed through the Crossroads early on the Sunday morning or June 28, 1863, after fording the Potomac River near Violet's Lock. One brigade was sent ahead to approach Rockville by way of Darnestown. "The other brigade took the direct route to the same place," as stated in The War of the Rebellion.

One section of Potomac Cemetery that remains unmarked by headstones is believed to be the burial place for Civil War soldiers. Perhaps they were killed in unrecorded skirmishes and died of typhoid while stationed at Great Falls. There was a hospital near the Falls. Local lore has it that the Confederate raider Col. John Mosby, "The Gray Ghost," and his men camped at the churchyard.

The year following the end of the Civil War, the Montgomery County Board of School Commissioners designated districts in the county for free public schools. On June 19, 1865, Oratio and Margaret Clagett deeded an acre and "four square perches" of land to the school board for the purpose of erecting a school next to the church. This little building became known as "Potomac Chapel School" and apparently was of the one room variety with heat from a wood stove and well water in a bucket.

As farming conditions in Montgomery County improved due to the advancement of more scientific agricultural methods, the farms ne-

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Offutt's Crossroads regained a measure of prosperity. The soil had become unproductive earlier in the century and by about 1830 the land was so poor the county was referred to as "the Sahara of Maryland." In the 1850's the Quakers of Sandy Spring brought new life to the soil by the application of "Chinchi Peruvian Guano."

During the latter part of the 19th century, the congregation of the Potomac Chapel was made up mainly of the families of local farmers, with the addition of the doctor (Dr. Cephas Willett) and perhaps one or two blacksmiths or storekeepers. The frame church building was enlarged and remodeled in 1884 and in 1889 was incorporated as Potomac Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church South. In this period the Chapel was served by ministers who also traveled to other churches in the circuit. One long time resident was recently quoted as having remarked that one would never know what would happen when attending the old church - the preacher might not show up or sometimes no one would show up.

Some of the earlier records of Potomac Chapel were lost, therefore scant information is available for the latter part of the 1800's. The names of 21 ministers are recorded as having served Potomac Chapel between 1873 and 1940. In the latter date, Rev. E.C. Soper accepted a call to Potomac and was the first full time preacher here. Registers of church memberships, handcopied in Spencerian script, show the enrollments and sometimes date of deaths of church members. The only unusual "disposition of membership" was that of one person who was "expelled for profanity" in 1885.

After the turn of the century, a little more information is available. A house on Falls Road was purchased from Edward Perry in 1908 for use as a parsonage. At this time, Potomac was part of a circuit including Travillah, Darnestown and Germantown. Later, Darnestown was discontinued and Germantown was included with the Clarksburg circuit.

By 1923, Potomac Chapel had about 256 members. During this year, "Deerwood" was added to the Potomac charge and Great Falls was discontinued.

The Chapel was again remodeled in 1924 and a small auditorium added. Rev. R. L. Whitting wrote in his report to the Church Board, "On Sunday, Jan 4, (1924), we had the opening services of our new church. While there had been a heavy snow all a few days before and the roads were almost impassable, yet we had a fine congregation both morning and night."

In reminiscing about the old Chapel in the 1920's, Preston Blackie" Stearn recalled, "My first memory of coming to church was when I arrived on my pony at age eight or ten. I tied the pony to a tree in the church yard. Stearn has been a dedicated church and choir member for about forty years and "I've enjoyed every minute of it," he stated.

It was not until 1939 that Methodism was united, and Potomac Chapel became Potomac Methodist Church. Potomac continued to be a remote agricultural community but a few "cityfolk" who loved horses and open space began to acquire land in this part of the county. After the old Riding and Hunt Club merged with the Chev

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Chase Hunt and moved from Washington to Potomac and eventually to its location near the Semmes farm on Glen Road, more enthusiastic equestrians were drawn to the Potomac area.

Rev. Soper, who had arrived in 1940, was minister during the difficult years of World War II. The horse and buggy times seemed to return to Potomac when wartime gas rationing curtailed unnecessary driving. Sunday school children were picked up by a church bus, often driven by the minister. In 1945, Rev. Soper's report to the Board tells a little of the trying times. He wrote that he was reminded of a hymn written by Charles Wesley:

"What troubles have we seen. what conflicts we have passed,
"Fighting without and fears within since we assembled last."

He related the deaths of several members of the Church Board and of three of "our service men" killed in action.

Following Rev. Soper, Rev. Gloyd Allis came to Potomac Church and remained for 17 productive years. This was a period of great change in the area. The community which had been sleepy farmland began to blossom as suburbia. After the war, Potomac experienced a tremendous growth as young families moved to the area, bringing with them a need for more schools, shopping facilities and services of all kinds. Potomac Church was there to service all, and it was to become a virtual Town Hall when there was no other such facility in the neighborhood.

Frances Allis has many memories of her years as the wife of the Potomac Church pastor and gives a vivid picture of the changing times. Prior to the end of the war there had been only a few country store type buildings at the Crossroads, one of which had a beer garden attached. This place had not acquired a good reputation. Frances recalled that the first Sunday evening that she and Gloyd were ensconced in the little bungalow on Falls Road where they were staying until the parsonage was renovated, there was a loud knock on the door. She opened the door to find a man dripping blood. "I've been stabbed," he said, and continued to drop blood all over the living room floor while Gloyd phoned the police.

"Good heavens," Frances said to herself, "what kind of place is this?"

Of course it turned out to be a wonderful place for the Allises to share in the growth and development of the community along with the spiritual work of the church. "A new wind was blowing," Frances said.

In 1949 the Chapel was redecorated under the guidance of Genevive and Margery Hendricks. Margery owned Normandy Farms Restaurant. The Chapel was "an L shape, with beige color on the inside...It was not too much to look at. It was shabby," Frances said. The redecorated Chapel was painted a dark green, handsome new light fixtures were installed and the old oak outside doors were refinished and placed inside the church, enclosing the narthex. A mural depicting shepherds and the Christmas star was painted on the wall behind the altar.

As the community continued its rapid growth, the first section of the new Parish House facing South Glen Road was completed in

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1956 by Muth Brothers Contractors. Now Potomac Church, always ecumenical in spirit, was able to function as a community center. Although church activities were always scheduled first, the Parish House doors were opened for Boy and Girl Scouts, dance groups, Swimming and Recreation Association, Christian Science Congregation, senior citizen groups, exercise groups and others, all welcomed with no charge. An addition to the Parish House was completed by Briggs Construction Company in 1963, doubling space for church use.

As for the church members, Mrs. Allis recalls the tremendous amount of work accomplished when dinners were served and Christmas Bazaars and luncheons organized. "You didn't have to ask people to do things," she related. "They said if we're going to do this, I'll do that."

Following the Allises, the late Rev. DeWitt Dickey accepted a call to Potomac in 1964. In the late 60's a decision was made to tear down the Chapel which was showing the ravages of time. When the choir walked down the center aisle of the church, the floor vibrated and the whole building seemed to give a little shake. Termites were discovered throughout the wood structure and an examination of the attic showed a roof braced with Y shaped tree limbs still covered with bark.

The Chapel was razed in April, 1969 and a new Georgian Colonial building was constructed on the same spot. The contractor was Coleman and Wood, LeRoy Trunnel served as Building Committee chairman and the cost was \$250,000. The red doors of the new church were opened for services for the first time on Christmas Eve, 1969. The Sanctuary seats 350 in the nave, with balcony space for 100 and a choir loft area for 36 members.

In 1968 the Methodists had united with the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Church and again acquired an altered name: The Potomac United Methodist Church. A new parsonage was purchased at 10209 Gary Road in 1970. In 1976, the Potomac Church and Cemetery was designated one of Montgomery County's Historic sites. It has been commemorated as an historic site by the Janet Montgomery Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution with the placing of a plaque on the church wall. Another DAR marker dated 1916 is in the churchyard.

No history of the church would be complete without information about the surrounding cemetery. In recent years, a long time Potomac resident, Claire Kitchen, left a substantial legacy to the church for the purpose of beautifying and renovating the cemetery. This has been done, and a portion of the churchyard designated the Claire Kitchen Memorial Garden.

Long ago when the cemetery first was established, some sections were never plotted, according to records on hand. Sometimes even the plot owners were not sure of the boundaries. New records of plots and markers have been accomplished by the Cemetery Committee. It is believed that graves other than those of the Hunts date back to the 1700's, but since markers in those days were usually made of wood, their location has not been determined.

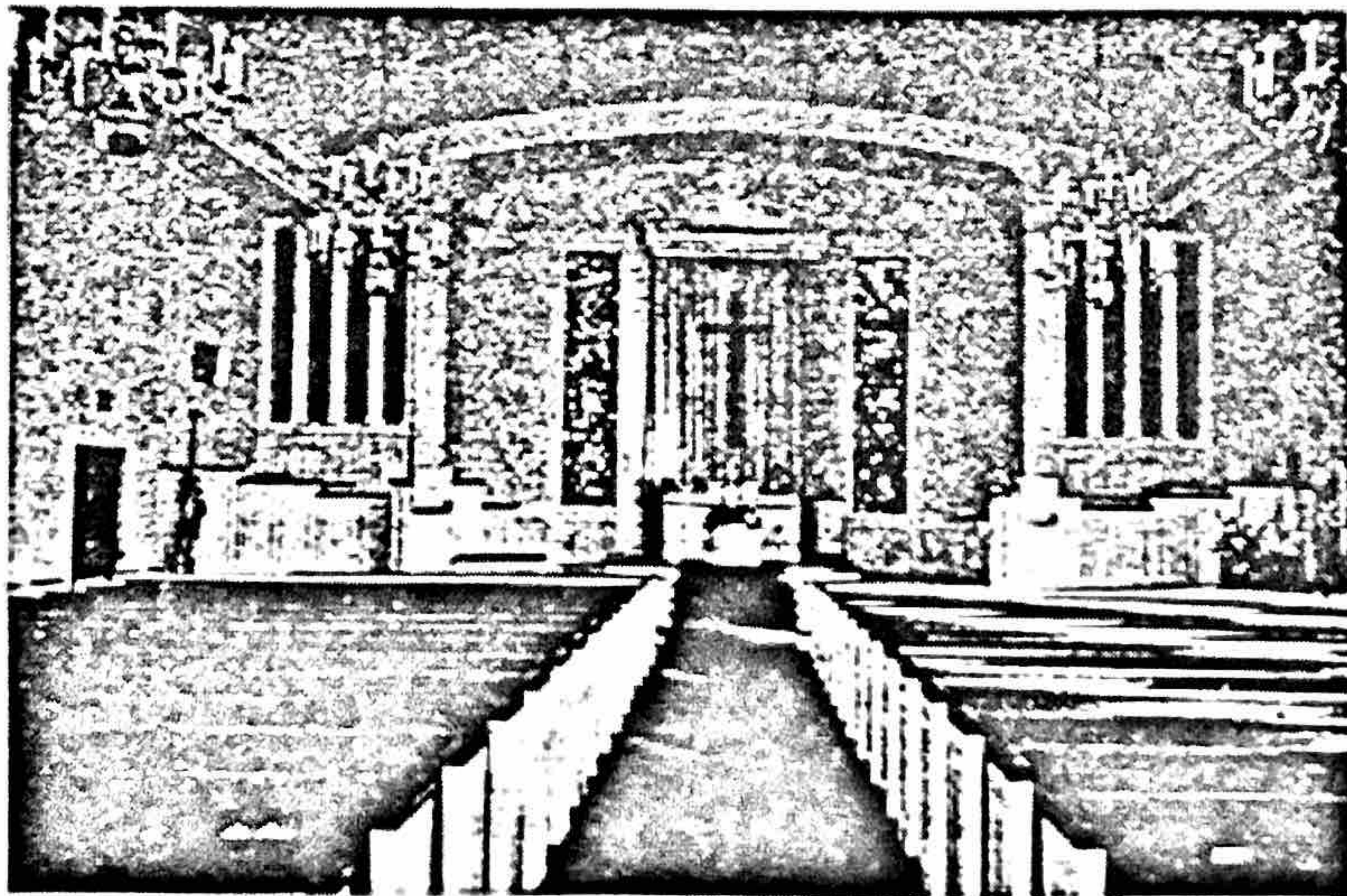
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Although we can no longer quote from Thomas Gray's Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard, and claim our cemetery is "Free from the madding crowd's ignoble strife," still a holy and sequestered feeling prevails as one walks through the paths and grassy passages. In addition to the many tombstone epitaphs that read, "Gone But Not Forgotten," or "Rest In Peace," other descriptive passages bring poignant reminders of the church people of yesterday. A stone dated 1893 reads, "Dulcie Duley: On earth no more her smile will greet. Darling Dulcie fare thee well. Dulcie was 17 years of age. Benjamin E. Pennifill, whose family name is recorded with varied spellings, died in 1915. His marker bears this inscription: "A place is vacant in our hearts which never can be filled." Then there is the resting place of Willie Fields, age five months: "Lovely thoughts forever linger Over the grave where Willie lies." The small stone, dated 1907, seems surrounded with an aura of blessing and peace.

Today the church stands in the midst of a community burgeoning with new shopping centers, luxurious homes, expanding highways and the encroachments of a booming society. Rev. Edison M. Amos arrived in 1984 and continues to serve as Pastor and Counselor. Under his leadership, the church celebrates the 135th Anniversary of Methodism here in Potomac as well as the 273rd year of a church on this historic site.

On this spot, on this bend in Falls Road, a place of worship remains on land first consecrated almost three centuries ago. This is our heritage.

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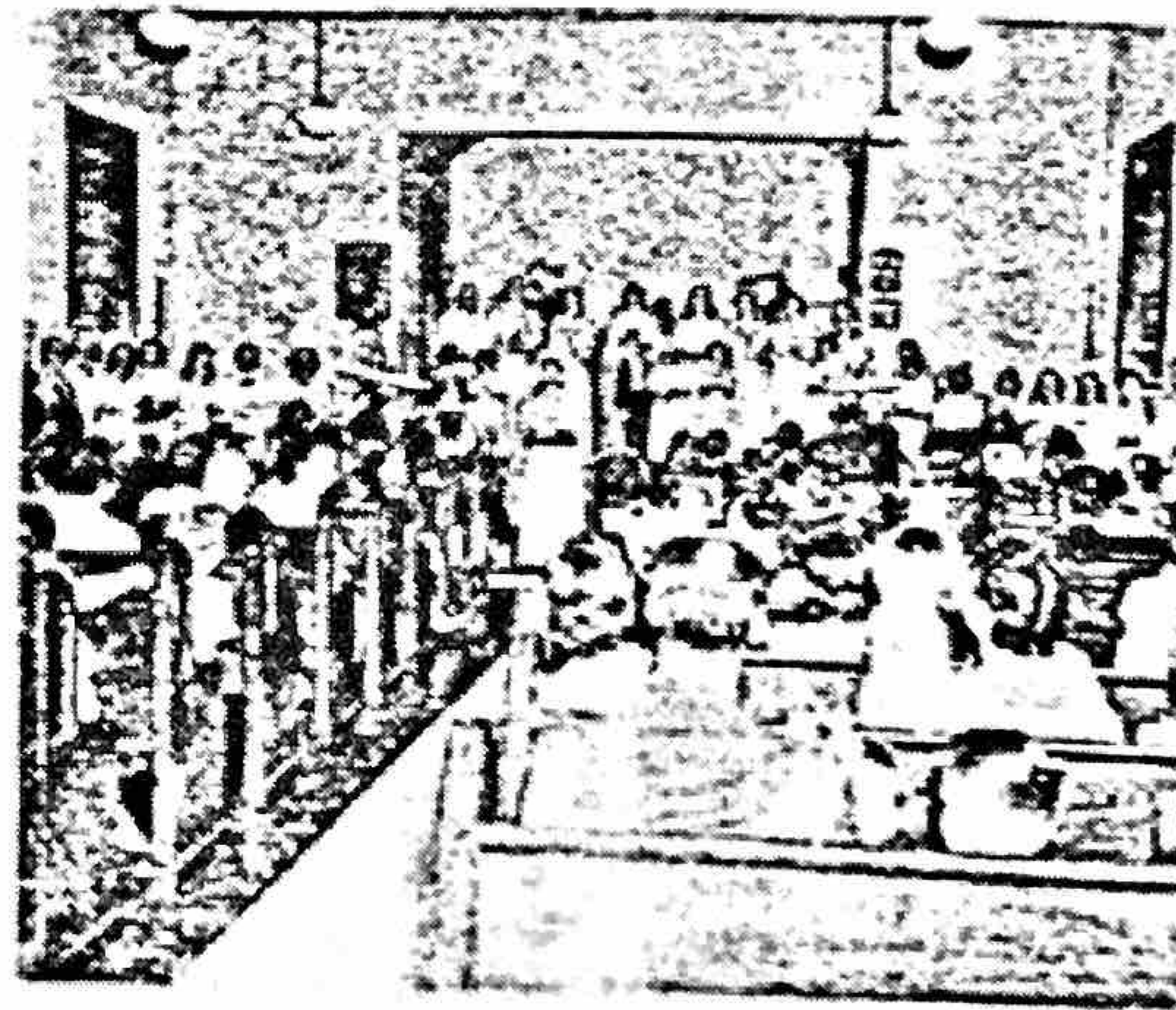
Congregation of Potomac Methodist Church ca. 1925 - 1930



The Potomac Choir 1971 Rev. Dickey minister. Gertrude Mockbee, organist.



Men's Bible Class October 1938



Tom Thumb wedding with many former brides modeling their gowns. 1946 Rev. Gloyd Allis, minister

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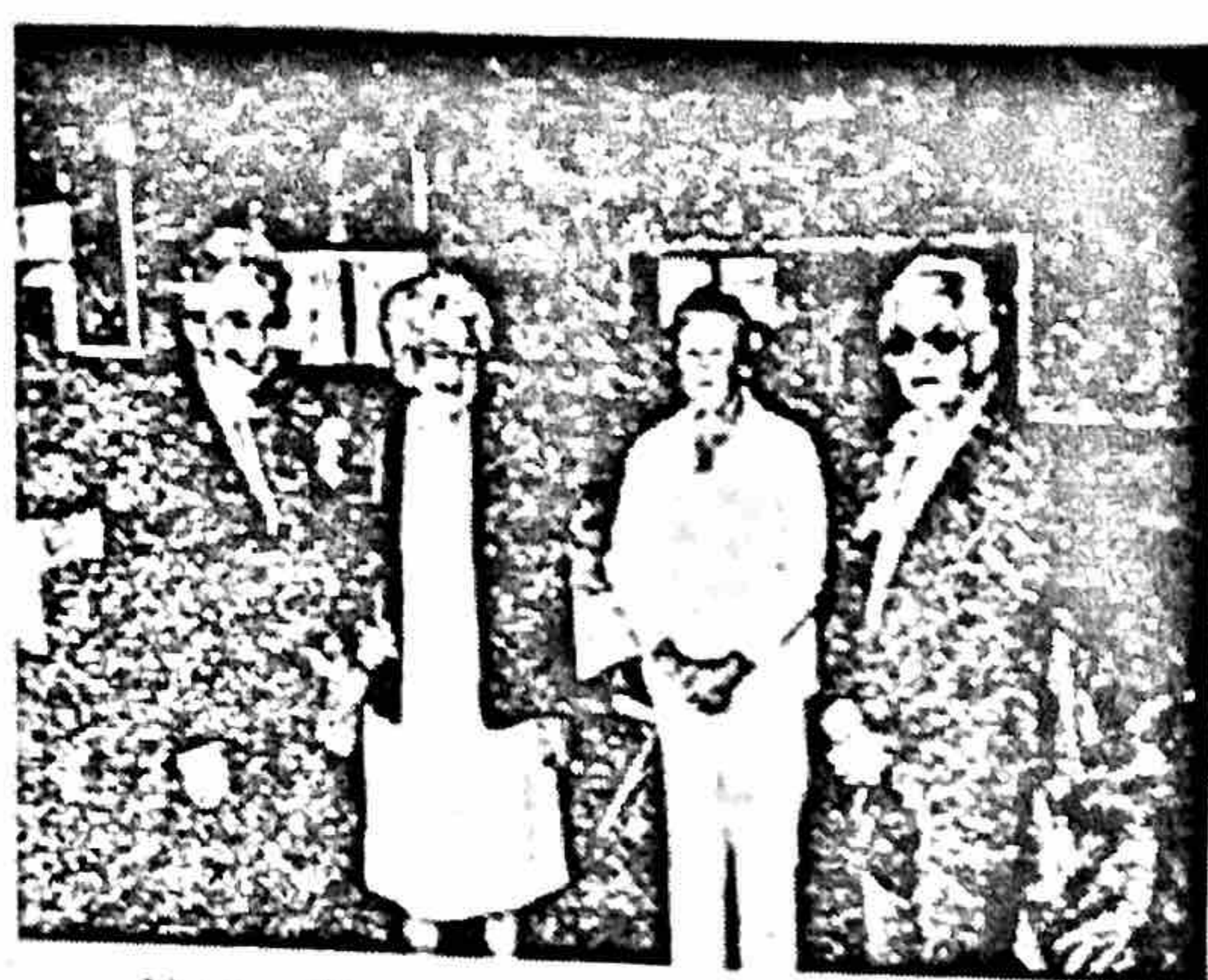
POTOMAC METHODIST MINISTERS FROM 1873

1873	P. H. Whisner	1919	Luke R. Markwood
1875	J. C. Dice	1920	E. W. Brubaker
1879	George T. Tyler	1925	R. L. Wittig
1884	B. W. Bond	1925	J. E. McDonald
1887	David Bush	1926	H. F. Coffman
1891	L. L. Loyd	1928	P. S. Helmintoller,
1895	T. G. Nevitt	1932	John H. Davidson
1897	A. A. Armstrong	1935	K. D. Swecker
1899	G. Dorsey White	1940	Elgar C. Soper
1903	W. F. Locke	1946	Gloyd E. Allis
1908	Wm. Lee Smith	1964	DeWitt Dickey
1912	Homer Welch	1979	Herbert L. D. Doggett
1914	A. B. Sapp	1982	William Farrady
1915	B. L. Parrott	1984	Edison M. Amos



Rev. Elgar Soper, Dr. Edison Amos, William Doggett, architect and son of Rev. Doggett and Trustees Chairman C. Dixon Ashworth at the dedication of the Claire M. Kitchen Memorial Garden.

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Mrs. Frances Allis [right] with Vee Ashworth, Vee Stearn and Flora Mullen , 1987



Rev. Herbert Doggett with, left to right, Loreen Walters, Mary Ellen Amos, Joanna Doggett and Lloyd Walters. 1987



Rev. DeWitt Dickey in the new sanctuary as it was being built, 1969.

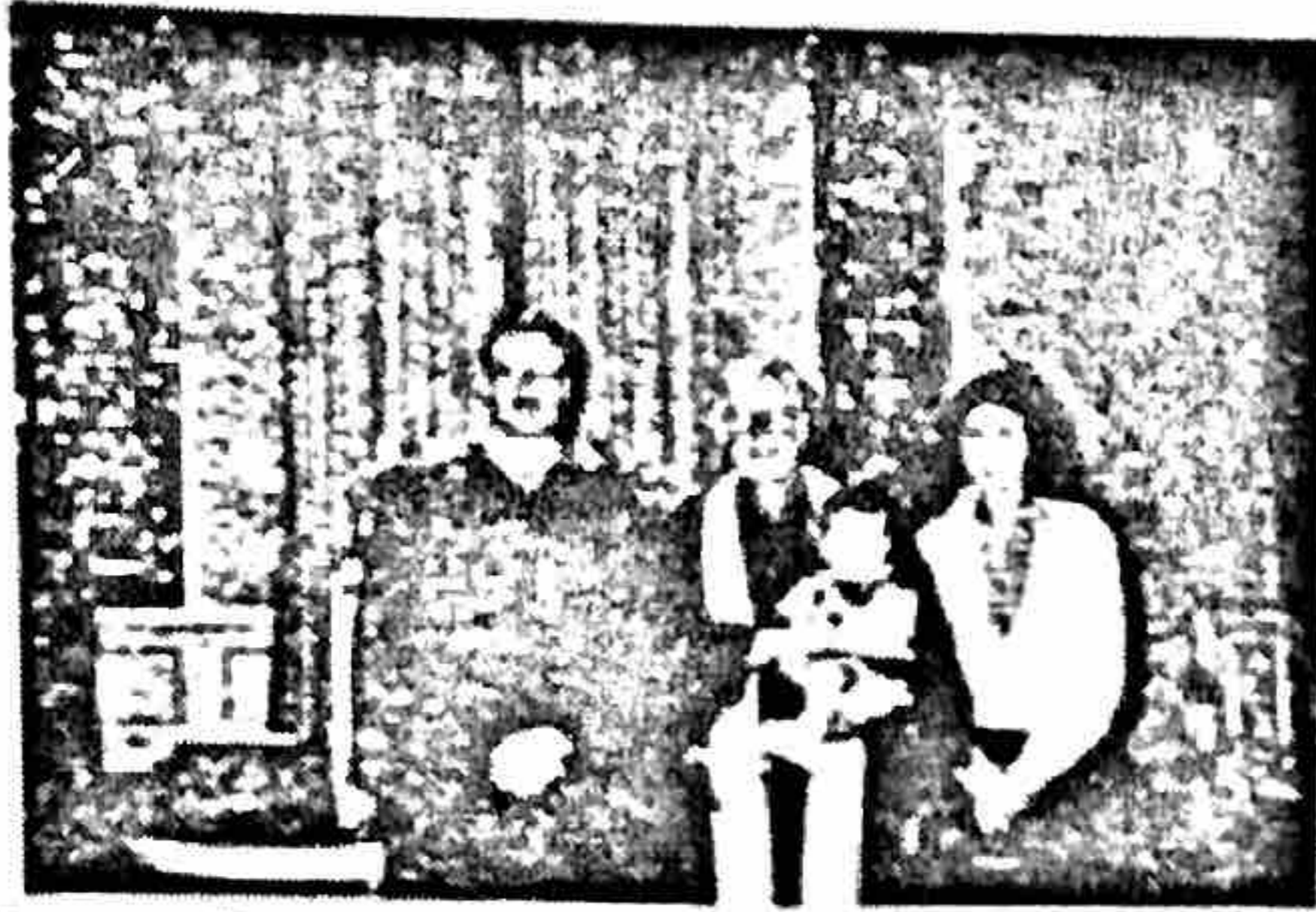


Rev. William Farrady [right] with Dr. Amos and the Mayer family at the baptism of their daughter.



Rev. Gloyd Allis at the home of Bess & Kelso Shipe 1965

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Rev. Tim Funk, Student Minister 1985-88, with his wife Sharon, daughter Rebekkah and Dr. Amos



Lay Leader Glenn Everett talk with Lay Members to Annual Conference Howard and Nadine Williams



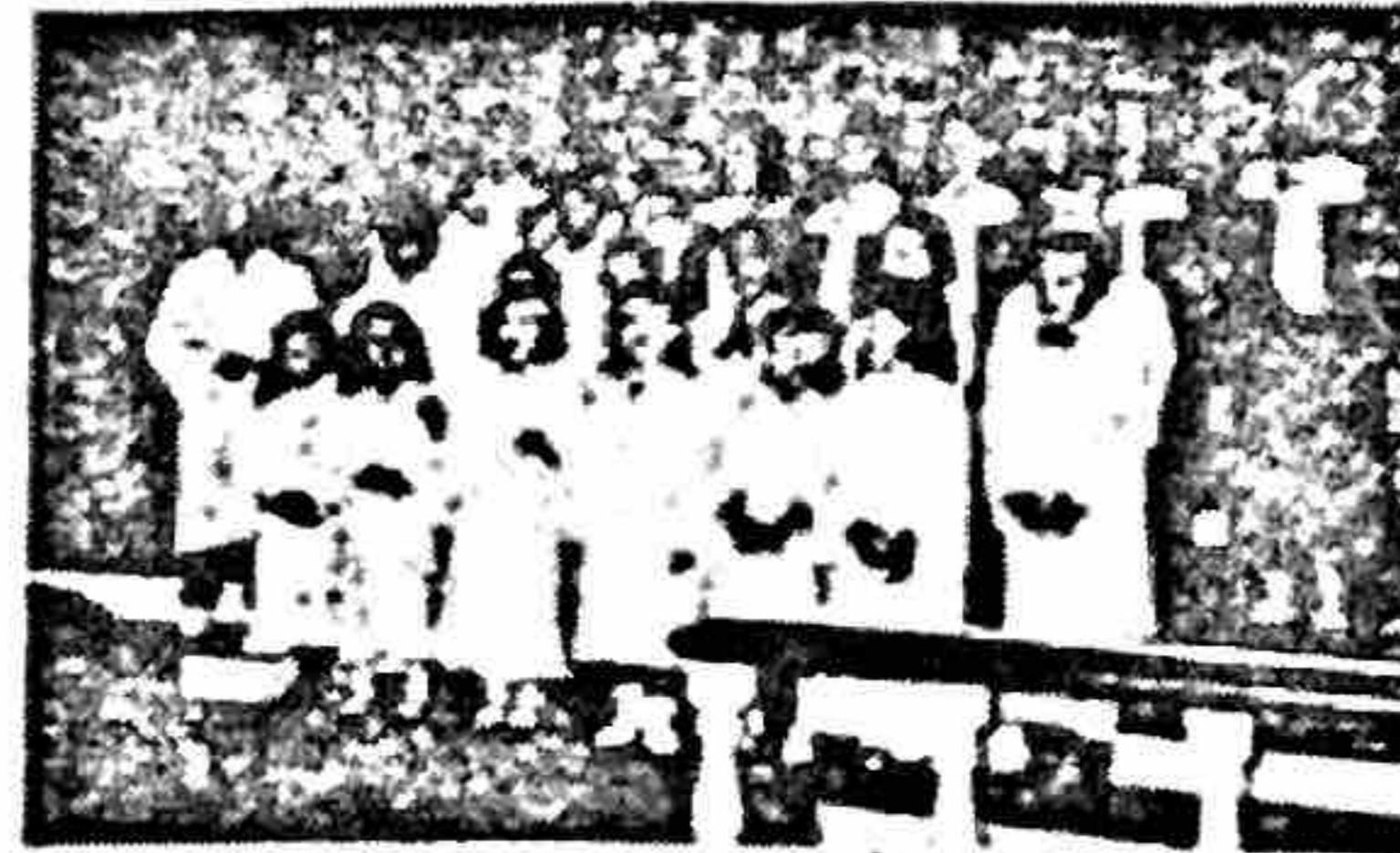
The Parish House and the Church School students



Fred Marvel, Student Minister 1988-90



Ray Norton, 97, Potomac's oldest member.

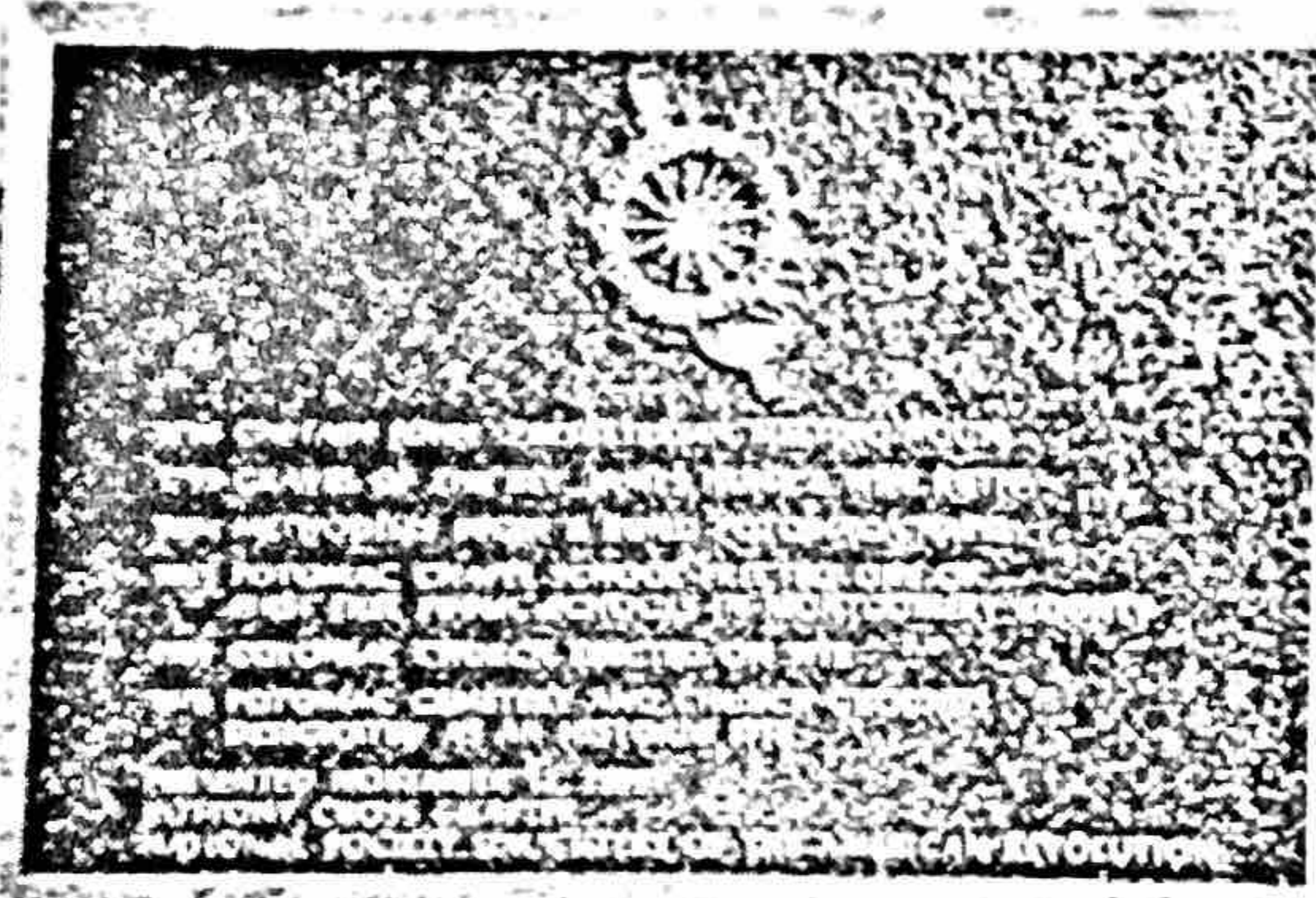


The Children's Cherub and Lyric Choirs



Tom Andrew and the 1989 Potomac Chancel Choir

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Darius (Lagett
1814

To } Deed,

The Trustees of
Potomac Chapel.

Recd 9 Oct. 1877 to
be recorded and same
day was recorded in
Lib. C. B. P. 11: 17 fo.
lic 178 fo. in of the
Land Record Books
for Montgomery County
and examined pro.
C. S. Sullyman,
Clk.

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This Deed, made this 13th day of Sept in the
year eighteen hundred and seventy seven by
Darius Clagett and Henrietta Clagett his

of Montgomery County in
state of Maryland Witnesseth: that in
consideration of the sum of thirty
(30) dollars to them in hands
the said Darius Clagett and Henrietta
Clagett his wife do grant unto William
S. Harrison, Robert G. Connell, Montgomery
Clagett, Philip Stone Jr, Ruben Kreame
Edwin Wallis, and Robert G. Davidson

Trustees, and their suc-
cessors in office. In trust for the uses and purposes
hereinafter mentioned, all that lot, piece
parcel of land lying and being in said
Montgomery County in said State and Cont.
within the following metes and bounds con-
and distances to wit: Part of a tract of land
called "Old Lot"; Beginning at a persimmon
standing on the West side of the public rd
leading from the Great Falls of the Potomac

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4 links, thence S. $11\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ W. $8\frac{3}{10}$ ps to the most Northern corner of the lot heretofore laid out for the use of the congregation worshipping at Potomac Chapel; then S. $71\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ 19 ps and 9 links to another corner of said Lot; thence N. $74\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ E., 3 ps and 1 link to the place of beginning, Containing $7\frac{1}{8}$ of an acre and 10 square perches of land more or less.

To Have and to Hold the above lot, piece or parcel of land, with the buildings, improvements, rights, ways, members, privileges, advantages and appurtenances therunto belonging or in any wise appertaining forever, in Trust for the exclusive use and benefit of the Society of Christians or Christian people usually called Methodists - residing in the vicinity of and in the habit of attending Divine Worship in the building commonly known as "Potomac Chapel", now standing upon the land described in a Deed from Aratio Clagett & wife to the Trustees of Potomac Chapel", bearing date the 28th day of April 1866, and recorded in the R. R. D. No. 7. L. in 6674 668: To

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in Office: — And whenever any vacancy or vacancies shall occur in said Trustees, by resignation or removal from said Montgomery County, such vacancy or vacancies shall be filled by an election, by a vote of a majority of said Christian people, called Methodists, of said vicinity, held on the premises hereinbefore referred to, as described in said deed from Anna Claggett to said Trustees, pursuant to public notice there given, at least one week previous to any and every such election; and an accurate record of all such elections, and of regulations made for the use and management of the premises aforementioned, and of other acts done by them, shall be kept by said Trustees and by their successors in office. And such record shall be sufficient evidence of all such elections, and of all such regulations and acts of said Trustees.

In testimony whereof, We have hereunto set our hands and affixed our seals the day and year first hereinbefore mentioned

Signed, sealed & delivered

Levin Claggett Seal

in presence of

Levin Claggett Seal

11/9 21 10 11

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State of Maryland, Montgomery County to wit:
 I hereby certify that on this _____ day
 of _____ in the year eighteen hundred
 seventy seven before me, the subscriber, a Justice
 of the Peace of the State of Maryland,
 and for the County aforesaid, personally
 appeared Darius Clagett and Henrietta
 Clagett his wife and did each acknowledge
 the foregoing Deed to be their act.

J. S.

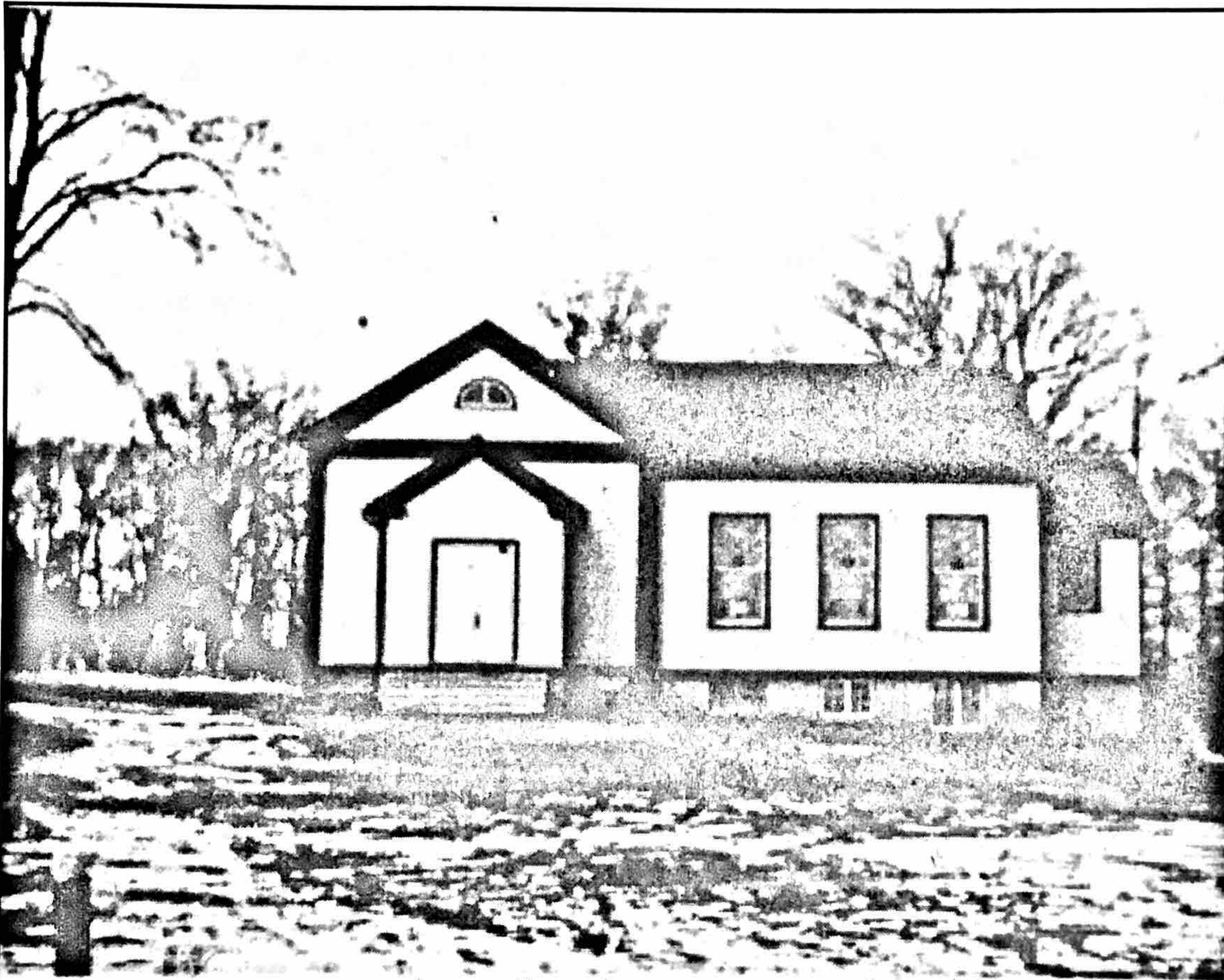
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CELEBRATING 150 YEARS

open hearts

Photo of old church



Old Potomac Methodist Ch

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A HISTORY OF POTOMAC UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
By Patricia Elton - June 5, 1994

As early as 1716 history tells us there was a meeting house built of logs near this location. Since the area was heavily Scots-Irish, Presbyterianism was their religious preference. Circuit-rider parsons came from Bladensburg to preach. The Rev. Hugh Conn first came here to organize a church. Rev. Conn was born in 1685 in Macgilligan, Ireland and educated at Faughanvale and the University of Glasgow, Scotland. He continued to preach at Upper Marlboro until his death on June 28, 1752. He probably came to address the congregation at Cabin John often.

Since the Cabin John Meeting House was for a time the church for miles around, people crossed the river from Virginia to attend. They came from Rockville by wagon, on horseback or on foot. The land on which the meeting house stood was given to Edward Offutt in 1746. In those days a house of worship affiliated with the established church was known as a "meeting house" and was also the center of social activity in the community. Governor Stone of Maryland invited the Presbyterians to settle in Maryland in accordance with this colony's religious toleration law. In Virginia the only accepted church was the Anglican Church and those who refused to support and attend were known as dissenters. The preachers had limited authority and were often persecuted or incarcerated for opposing the Church of England.

The meeting house took its name from the Cabin John Creek. The creek was named for Captain John Smith who came this far up the Potomac on an exploring expedition in 1608 to trade with the Indians.

The next minister whom we know served the church is Reverend James Hunt, Jr., who was born in Hanover County Virginia in 1731. He was a graduate of Princeton and had served the Little Britain Church before coming to Bladensburg and Cabin John. He accepted the call to Cabin John on June 13, 1769. He later purchased land nearby and established residence at his plantation which he called "Tusculum". With the encouragement of Revolutionary War Major Samuel Wade Magruder and to increase income he established the first school in this county at his residence in 1783. It was known as Tusculum Academy and continued till 1787. Only boys were allowed to attend as it was not popular to educate girls in those days. Some of his most renowned students included his own sons William and James, the Magruder boys, and William Wirt. William Wirt later won fame as author, orator, lawyer, U.S. Attorney General, under James Monroe, presidential candidate. The Rev. Hunt and his wife Ruth served the church until their deaths in 1793 and are buried in the church cemetery in the earliest marked graves.

Among those who preached at the church were John Brackenridge who was the founder of Rockville Academy in 1809 and Chaplain of the Senate in 1811. His residence was at "Muddy Branch Plantation". He was in Washington when the British attacked

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during the conflict of 1812. He ministered to the wounded. Another supply minister at this war time was William Maffitt of Virginia. He was host to President Madison when he fled from Washington.

As the culture of tobacco wore out the land and farming became depressed in the area, people moved away from the county. The meeting house was abandoned. By 1854 economics were improving with the introduction of fertilizers and improved farming methods. About this time a Methodist congregation was formed. Land was given by Oratio Claggett and a frame church was built on the site of the old meeting house. The land was formally deeded to the Methodist Congregation in April 1866. The gravestones of Oratio and Margaret Claggett may be seen next to the parking lot.

During the Civil War the congregation was anguished over which side their sympathies were to fall. They finally joined the Methodist Episcopal Church South. On Sunday morning June 28, 1862, J.E.B. Stuart's Cavalry rode by on their way to Gettysburg. Some unknown worshipers may have rushed out to cheer them on. Some unknown southern soldiers are reputed to be buried in our cemetery.

The Rev. Edwin Wallace was the minister in 1870. A marble tablet to his memory and commemorating his devotion to his duty was placed in the church.

In 1884 the church was remodeled and enlarged. A large chandelier with oil lamps was added. There was a gallery for blacks in the back. Among the supplies during this time were Beverly W. Bond, H.P. Hamill and A.R. Martin.

The first parsonage was purchased in 1908 from Mr. Edwin Perry. Small rural congregations such as this one were usually unable to support a minister alone. Therefore circuits of several churches shared the services of one or more ministers. In 1908 this circuit included Travillah, Darnestown and Germantown.

During the period of World War I Rev. Archibald B. Sapp and Lee Parrott served the church. During the pastorate of Lee Parrott, 1915-1918, Darnestown Church was closed and Germantown joined with Clarksburg, thus dividing the circuit. This left Potomac and Travillah.

By 1923 Potomac Chapel, as it had become known, had grown to 256 members and Derwood was added to the circuit. In 1924 an auditorium was added.

The debt was cleared with a proper note burning ceremony during the Rev. Helmtoller's tenure (1928-1931).

By 1940 there was a cloud hovering over the world. The first full time minister Elgar C. Soper, a young bachelor, came to Potomac Chapel on his first assignment which proved to be a challenging one. Everyone was engrossed in things related to war effort. Rev. Soper courted and married one of the parishioners but their life together was shortened by an untimely death. She is buried in the cemetery. He remained here until 1946 and is living.

Rev. Gloyd and Frances Allis came in 1946. This was a lively time at Potomac. There were Tom Thumb weddings, strawberry

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organ and was much involved while producing and caring for young family. This was a time of prosperity and of pe reestablishing there lives after the war years.

The first section of the parish house was constructed in 1 Mr. -Preston Stearn was one of the contractors. In 1963 addition to the parish house was completed.

Rev. Dewitt Dickey and his wife Mildred came to Potomac 1964. It soon became evident that some drastic changes had to made in the house of worship. The ravages of time had taken toll and it was decided to demolish the historic little ch and build a beautiful new structure looking ahead to the fu growth of the community. The work was begun in 1968 contractors Coleman and Wood. The project was complete by the of 1969. Rev. Dickey presided at the first service in the building on Christmas Eve 1969. It was a joyous event and been a popular tradition ever since.

The new parsonage on Gary Road was purchased in 1970 to occupied by the Dickeys.

The Potomac United Methodist Cemetery was designate historic site by the Montgomery County Historic Committee 1976.

Rev. Herbert Doggett and his wife Joanna came in 1979. quickly endeared themselves to the membership. Joanna's spe interest was world affairs and she held discussion groups: great decisions. During this time the church was fortunate have Bruce Hathorne as youth leader. He used all of his talents to create an attractive youth program. Many who reme him were saddened by his untimely passing in 1993.

Rev. William Farrady and his wife Jean brought their special persona to the church during the next few years.

Dr. Edison Amos and Mary Ellen came in 1984 and have conti their outpouring of creative energy until the present. The ch has grown and prospered and continued to play a very active in the Potomac Community. They will be greatly missed. We forward to a new era with Rev. Jack Ewald.

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From the time of the building of the original Methodist Church here until the separation of the Potomac Charge from Rockville in 1908, we have but outline history. The Potomac Chapel was built first in 1854. In 1884, due to the fact that the old building was small to accommodate the crowds who came, it was remodeled and on again, in 1924, the present church came into being by the addition of the auditorium.

It seems that Brother Montgomery Claggett was certainly one of the very earliest of the line of faithful Sunday School Superintendents who have served here. His service and influence were exerted for years here, and the influence remains to this day in the lives of who knew him. From what we can gather, the general method of conducting the Sunday School has not changed much through the years. School always opened with old fashioned singing and prayer, classes then followed, although the present system of grading was probably not closely adhered to. Although during these very early days preaching was held here only twice a month, and later sometimes in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon, the Sunday School was held each Sunday morning.

The names of several of the earlier teachers in the Sunday School and workers in the Church come to us from the memories of those who knew them. They are Miss Annie Welch, Miss Sallie Kilgore, (who taught first the larger girls, and latterly the primaries) Mrs. William I. Mr. Horace Benton, Miss Mary Connell, Miss Kate Collins, Mrs. Lari Claggett, Mr. & Mrs. George Bell, Mrs. Lucy Pumphrey, and many, many others whose names are inscribed on the heart of this community and on the Lamb's Book of Life.

Certainly we will not forget the sainted name of Reverend Edw Wallace, the beloved local preacher and worker here for so many years. Brother Wallace during these years lived down near Bethesda, and on Sunday would regularly appear for service astride of his horse. To such a man of God, bad weather and worse roads meant but little when it was the time to appear at God's house for worship and service. Besides preaching on occasion, and other service in the Church, Brother Wallace is particularly remembered for the experience meetings that he used to conduct. These were generally conducted during the Sunday hour with the adults who had come in attendance. In those days, fathers and mothers saw the necessity and enjoyment of coming to Sunday School with their children; and the children never forgot it.

The worship services themselves were attended with a great deal of enthusiasm and devotion by great crowds of people. It was not unusual in that day to hear hearty "amens" from devout worshippers. There were many men, heads of families, who could with fervor lead in public prayer. Somewhat dismayed, I have learned of someone who recalls an occasion which would have, but for the earnestness of it all, provoked a smile. It was a moment when two brethren were leading in prayer one time. During the times of the annual fall protracted meetings, especially would great crowds of people gather to hear the Word. They would come for miles around, many of them walking five miles or more.

It is interesting to those of us who live in a day of so much convenience in travel, to note how our spiritual fathers came to Church.

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Or must we forget our mothers either, who used to appear with us asurance mounted upon horseback, seated upon the familiar side-s For the purpose of their mounting and dismounting, a stump had be left, formed into a step. In the very early days, there were few conveyances, such as buggies, about. One Brother tells that he r bers only several in the whole community at one time. They came church by walking many weary miles, by horseback, in farm wagons, after the Civil War many of the farmers bought up used ambulances those also brought many. Not until a later day did they even hav general use of buggies and the familiar surry. Those who walked from the Canal and farther. It was not unusual for some to walk and from Rockville to church meetings.

The appearance of the old church is familiar to many who are active among us. The old Chapel had a single aisle down the mid the Church, with rows of benches on either side. A large chandel with six oil lamps lighted the main church room. Other oil lamps stationed on the pulpit to aid the preacher in following the serv In the rear of the church was a gallery. During these earlier da was occupied at service by the negroes. After the white people h dismissed it was the custom of these to have a meeting of their o accompanied with much spiritual singing and shouting.

In so far as we have been able to find out, the Civil War ha much actual influence on the services here during the time of its tion. There may have been some little feeling, perhaps laughable afterwards due to the presence of a Yankee or a Rebel preacher, w didn't suit the taste of all who heard him.

The names of all the preachers who served here during this p is incomplete on this paper. Also, the order in which they came us is lost. However, the names of such men of God as Tyler¹⁸⁷⁷, Nevi¹⁸⁷⁷, Armstrong¹⁸⁷¹, Lloyd¹⁸⁷⁴, Eddington, Beverly Bond¹⁸⁹⁴, Hamill, Dice¹⁸⁷⁷, Taylor¹⁸⁷⁷, will stir tender memories in the hearts of many. E. L. Wolfe and Copenhaver served the Rockville Circuit during the last period wh Potomac was a part of that charge. After the division, Dr. Wolfe came the first pastor of the Rockville station.

The history of the more modern Potomac Chapel is more or less familiar to all who are here. About 1908, the Church at Rockville that it was to their advantage and that of the Kingdom for them to forward as a single church, or in Conference language, a station c As a result, Potomac was made the head of a separate circuit which composed of, in addition to itself, Travillah, Darnestown, and Ger town, William Smith was sent here as the first pastor of the new circuit in 1908. There was at that time no parsonage, and for a t he stayed with the family of Brother George Bell. That year the p parsonage was purchased from Mr. Ed. Perry. Brother Smith was fol in succession by Brethren Welch¹⁹¹⁵, Sapp¹⁹¹⁵, and Parrot¹⁹¹⁵⁻¹⁹¹⁷. While Brother Parrot was here, the church at Darnestown did not feel able to con as a separate congregation, so it was discontinued. Sometime late (definite date not known by the writer) the church at Germantown w added to the Clarksburg Charge, leaving only Potomac and Travillah Following Brother Parrot came Brethren Markwood¹⁹¹⁷⁻²⁰ and Watkins. It w during the pastorate of Brother Watkins¹⁹²⁰⁻²² (if we are not in error) that a most refreshing revival was held here under the leadership

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and a greatly increased membership. The Sunday School felt the time and there was for a time a Men's Bible Class of close to forty men taught by Brother Licklider. The next pastor was Brother Witting, followed in succession until now were Brothers Brubaker, Gaither, McDonald, Coffman, Helms, and the present pastor. It was under Brother Helms' pastorate that the Church debt was finally paid off. The note-burning was marked with an appropriate ceremony. It was also, during this latter time that the Church at Travilah felt itself compelled to go the way formerly taken by Darnestown. However some of the members of the former Travilah church are some of the most active that we have with us here today.

In conclusion, it seems fitting that we should simply list the names of those who have through the years served faithfully as Superintendents of the Sunday School. Some of them served for long and unusually useful terms. If the list is incomplete it is only due to an oversight and incomplete information. As we recall them, they have been Montgomery Clagett, Charlie Higgins, J. W. Walker, Norman Ingalls, Earl Starn, Walter Myers, Norman Ingalls (second time) and our present faithful leader, A. D. Hays.

Compiled by,

John H. Davidson, 1932-34
 Preacher in Charge,
 August 18, 1934

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