

# Hope Ch. = Early Church Members

Hays Methodist Church 1886-1961.doc

See the other information in the booklet from October 26, 1977 for the Mortgage Burning Service. Some of this information is reprinted in that booklet. Similar text that is repeated appears in blue text below.

The old church was demolished in late September 1964. Also look at the Homestead Messenger from September 27, 1964.

There is a conflict in the date of the dedication for McKee M.E. Church on February \_\_\_\_, 1886  
Where did Mrs. Lou Gordon live in Hays?  
Where is Dewey Hall located?

Get Information

## HISTORY OF THE HAYS METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Robert Patterson, Pastor  
**75TH Anniversary Celebration**  
**June 7, 8, 11, 1961**

### Program Booklet

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7th

6:00 p.m. Banquet

7:30 p.m. Rev. Luffburrow

THURSDAY, JUNE 8th

8:00 p.m. Class Night

Speakers: Rev. John H. Ward, William Skelton,  
George Kennedy, Glenn Kohlhepp

SUNDAY, JUNE 11th

9:50 a.m. Sunday School

Children's Day Program

11:00 a.m. Morning Service

Sermon by Dr. Paul Lamberston

### Friendship Social

The history of the Hays M.E. Church dates back almost 125 years to the foundation of a Union Sabbath School in 1842 in Six Mile Ferry.

Merrick Munson, Superintendent of the Daniel Bushnell Coal Co., was instrumental in organizing the Sabbath School and leased a piece of land from Daniel Risher on the present site of Dewey Hall. A little building, known as Hope Church was erected there. In 1842 this building was moved across the road to land later owned by Mrs. Lou Gordon, and is still standing [in 1961]. It has since, been remodeled and is at present a dwelling.

The history of this early church is closely tied in with that of the Anne Ashley M.E. Church, which was formerly known as the Franklin Church. The Giles, Henry, Woozley, Morgan, Montooth, Watson, Kirkland, Williams, Jack, Haddon, Hillman, Guthrie and Gordon families were all early members and all had originally belonged to the Franklin Church. Although these families were all Methodist, the Sabbath School continued to be a Union one,

Hope Church

and pastors of various denominations occupied its pulpits.

Sometime about 1857 or 1858 a great revival was held at the Franklin Church. Many young people from Six Mile Ferry, together with young people from Redmond's Mills and Blossomville, two small villages between Six Mile Ferry and Becks Run, walked there night after night to revival meetings and many of them were soundly converted. They later became the organization of our present church.

In 1862, Mr. Munson moved to Birmingham, and left without his leadership, the Sabbath School languished. It was reorganized by the Methodists and named The Streets Run Sunday School. A Rev. Hawkins, from up the Allegheny River, preached there a few times and in 1864 Rev. Dermitt held a successful series of meetings. In 1869 the Hope Church was abandoned and the Sunday School moved to Blossomville, then to Glass Run and finally to Blackburn Run. However, it remained a Union Sunday School. For a while, services were held alternately in the Glass Run and Blackburn Schools.

In 1870, the Class Meeting was organized by the Methodists and Cottage Prayer Meetings were held. These class meetings were continued for many years and were the source of power and religious fervor of the church. Among the able leaders were: John Woozley, William Woozley and Hugh Fishwick, who were all converted about 1870 in the Anne Ashley Church and came here as organizers of this church. Then there was J.F. Minnuwish who came to us from the Spencer Church about the same time and was one of the class leaders. Later, these numbered also J. Chas. Woozley, and Wm. Fellabom. These were all mighty factors in helping mold the deep religious life of the church. The Sabbath School was a member of Peters Creek Circuit along with Jefferson, James and Franklin Churches. Shireoaks later became a member.

In 1885 Rev. Clouse, a Lutheran minister, preached at the Blackburn and Forest Schools. He was so well liked that the committee requested the Methodist Conference to appoint him pastor for the coming year. However, this was not possible, and Rev. J.P. McKee was appointed to the circuit. Two weeks after he became pastor, he started a movement to construct a church building at Six Mile Ferry. On November 10, 1885, a meeting was called for this purpose in the Glass Run Schoolhouse. A committee composed of Mrs. John Watson, Mr. George W. Giles, Pressley Gordon and John Woozley, was appointed to raise money for the project. In six days, \$519.00 was raised.

McKee located an abandoned church at Great Belt on the West Penn Railroad complete with furniture. The building was 30x40 feet in

Hope Church 1842-1869

McKee Church

size. The following men went to Great Belt to bring the building to Six Mile Ferry: Rev. J.P. McKee, Walter Swisher, Pressley Gordon, William Gordon, Henry I. Kirkland, Jefferson Kirkland and George W. Hunter. The men of the community volunteered their services and were credited on the books with \$2.00 for each day's service. The building was erected on a lot purchased for \$200. from I.D. Risher at the site of the present church and called the McKee M.E. Church.

The first Board of Trustees consisted of John Wozzley, J.S. Hillman, John Watson, Pressley Gordon, C.C. Giles, H.I. Kirkland and William Wozzley. The McKee M.E. Church was dedicated on February 7, 1886, and a great revival followed. About 100 people were converted and added to the church. Four of these early members are still on our church rolls [in 1961]: Mrs. Eva Reynolds, Mrs. Mary Whittaker, Mrs. Ida Mae Demmel and Mrs. Nettie Hamilton. Others are still living in other communities.

From 1885 until 1902, the McKee Church and Anne Ashley Church shared the same pastors. By 1902 the congregation had grown so that the erection of a larger building became necessary. Rev. J.E. Williams was pastor at this time. Early in March a new church was dedicated, costing about \$6,000. Conference was then asked to provide the undivided services of a pastor and the congregation became known as the Hays Methodist Episcopal Church. The Rev. E.G. Morris was its first pastor.

In 1911 the twenty-fifth anniversary of the church was celebrated. All former pastors were present and took part in the service. W.H. Kirkland was pastor at the time.

In 1922 we purchased our parsonage at a cost of \$4,300. Mrs. F.W. Scott as chairman of this committee raised a down payment of \$750. by subscription. Under her excellent leadership, the parsonage was completely paid for by subscriptions paid monthly by the members without any time asking any aid of the Church Board or of the congregation publicly. It was finally turned over by her, entirely unencumbered in 1926.

In 1936 the fiftieth anniversary was celebrated with Rev. J.T. Davis as pastor. Rev. Davis continued to serve the Hays Methodist Church faithfully and just before his retirement in June of 1938, he conducted a week of old fashioned "Revival Meetings", which uplifted the church spiritually.

From 1938 to 1942, the Rev. Arnold M. Beggs was pastor and in June of 1942, Rev. J.W. Lofgren became the pastor and served until June of 1945.

Rev. W.H. Wetzel came to us in 1945 and served faithfully through December 1953.

During his time the church underwent several improvements. The church received a new paint job inside and outside, the job being accomplished by the men of the church led by Rev. Wetzel. Through the efforts of Rev. Wetzel a beautiful new altar was installed. New stained glass windows were installed throughout the sanctuary, donated and dedicated by and for various groups and individuals of the church. A new carpet and lighting fixtures for the sanctuary were also added to the improvements. Not forgetting the spiritual welfare of the church, Rev. Wetzel held "Revival Meetings" each year bringing in many well known evangelists to help him. It was during this time that the name of the church was changed from Hays Methodist Episcopal Church to Hays Methodist Church through the uniting with other Methodist Churches. Or is it by action of the uniting conference?

Due to the condition of the old parsonage, it was decided that a new parsonage be built in the fall of 1953. Under the capable leadership of John Reutzler, land was purchased from Miss Betty Kirkland at the cost of \$600. The property was located on Slate St. A new six room brick and two car garage was completed in February 1954. The cost of the parsonage was \$13,500. The old parsonage was sold for \$6,000. The members responded beautifully to carry the share of the new project.

On December 24, 1953, the congregation of the church was saddened by the untimely death of Rev. W.H. Wetzel. During the eight and one-half years with the Hays Church, Rev. Wetzel added much to its spiritual and physical welfare.

Miss Louise Ward, daughter of a former member, Rev. John H. Ward was sent to Hays Methodist Church to serve until the new conference year. In her short stay Miss Ward endeared herself to the congregation and made many friends.

In June 1954, Rev. S.E. Cupcheck began his service with the Hays Methodist Church. It was decided at the beginning of the church year 1954 that Hays and West Homestead would share the same minister. Through Rev. Cupcheck's efforts and leadership, the Junior Department was organized. Rev. Cupcheck organized and spearheaded an "Every Member Canvass", which benefited the church greatly.

Rev. A.T. Sarrio replaced Rev. Cupcheck in 1956 and served the Hays Methodist Church until May 1958. During Rev. Sarrio's service, the church paid off the mortgage on the parsonage, which was well in advance of prescribed time. A legacy left by Mr. Hugh Fishwick Jr., a member of the church, helped to make this possible. This legacy also purchased a new Hammond Electric Organ. Under the leadership of Rev. Sarrio, one

New McKee Bldg

hundred new church hymnals were purchased and paid for by members of the church.

In June of 1958, Rev. E.R. Hammond came to serve Hays Methodist Church. During his ministry, the gas furnace was installed in 1959 to replace the old coal furnace. This project was led by Mr. Andrew Melzer and his son, Mr. Raymond Melzer. Other men of the church also aided this project. At the Fourth Quarterly Conference in the spring of 1960 it was acted upon and approved that West Homestead and Hays would discontinue sharing ministers. Due to ill health, Rev. E. Hammond decided to leave the ministry in May, 1960.

Rev. Robert Patterson and his family arrived in June 1960. News of the new Glenwood Bridge presented the church with a new and challenging venture. Under the able leadership of our minister, committees were formed to look into land on which to build a new church. Plans were approved to purchase the home and property of Miss Betty Kirkland for the site of the new church.

Now, in 1961, we celebrate our seventy-fifth anniversary. The Hays Methodist Church has been a constructive force in the community since it was founded. May it continue throughout many more years of service, its devotion to our Lord, so that someday the members of its congregation may say:

"We have fought a good fight, we have finished the course, we have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for us a Crown of Life, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give us, at the day."

**ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE**

- Mrs. Henry V. Fidorra, Chairlady
- Mrs. George W. Allen
- Mr. Anthony Berinti
- Mrs. Fred Billups
- Mrs. Earl Jones
- Mrs. Bruce Kohlhepp
- Miss Fern Lippert
- Mr. Raymond Melzer
- Miss Carol Miller
- Mrs. John Miller
- Mrs. John Reutzel
- Miss Elaine Schademan
- Mr. & Mrs. Jack Steele
- Miss Judy Steele
- Mr. Alva B. Timmins
- Mrs. Raymond Ward

New Church Bldg

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1886