

# Historical Record, of Westfield M. E. Ch.

to 1829, A.D.

Read before the Church Sabbath.

The Erie Am Conf. which includes this place was formed by the Genl Conf. which met in Cincinnati May 1836, but it has a history 40 years older than that. Its influence was there named but it had a birth long before. The Methodist mission followed here as else where closely upon the wave of evangelistic preaching the gospel wherever in Cabin of Forest he could find a human soul. Organizing 2 or more into classes, appointing a leader & then pushed out into the wilderness regions beyond. After the scattered flock no men ever endured more sacrifices or more more service than the Early Methodist Ministers. No man rightly call these early years of its history down to 1828 when the first M. E. Church was built in Westfield as the Heroic period of Chesapeake Methodist History.

As early as 1750 the French had taken possession of this territory as a part of the great valley of the Mississippi which they claimed with Canada they had erected 3 fortresses & garrisoned them with troops for its protection. One of these Presque Isle stood on the shore of the Lake one mile below Erie Another near the village of Waterford 12 miles south of Erie which they called Fort La Boef. The 3<sup>d</sup> stood near the mouth of French Creek just below Franklin which was called Fort Venango. The soldiers stationed in these were the first white men in the wilderness of the West.

The first Native white man who penetrated their dark depths was George Washington, afterwards the Father & deliverer of his Country in the year 1754 he was sent by Gov Dinwiddie of Virginia with a message to the Commandant of Fort La Boef, to induce him to relinquish the post as it was claimed by Virginia. The mission was not successful & Washington returned by French Creek & Fort Duquesne where Pittsburg now stands there through an unbroken solitude to be seen in William Bush, Va. Havey been providentially preserved while every one who started with him lost their lives through accident or exposure which befell them on their way.

# Historical Record.

after the conquest of the French possessions in North America by Great Britain this tract was ceded by the French to Great Britain by the treaty of Paris in 1763. & made over by them to the U.S. by the treaty of Paris Sept 3 1783.

After the boundaries of the state of Penna & N. York were fixed along their western line the state of Connecticut continued to claim a vast body of land lying west of these states but following the magnanimous example of Virginia who in 1784 ceded to the federal government all lands claimed by her west of the Ohio River so she in 1786 ceded her lands to the federal government reserves only 120 miles west of Pennsylvania on the south shore of Lake Erie called the Cret. Water Reserve this however was given to Ohio in 1801. when Ohio became a state a land office was established in 1795 at Erie & Capt John Kells & Rufus A Reed were the first settlers After Mad Anthony Wayne as the Indians called him had conquered them in many battles & they had become quiet the tide of Emigration began to flow westward towards the setting sun - The french forts became trading places from which the hardy Germans radiated into every portion of the wilderness, their hardships were terrible & we reap in joy what they sowed in tears provisions were carried along the lakes at enormous expense or from Pittsburgh to Meadville then called French Creek northward on the backs of men - Mr Reed of Erie laid the foundation of the vast fortunes he left behind him by transporting necessities provisions in pack horses from Buffalo to Erie more than 100 miles by rough roads on the Lake shore

The ager & Bellevue fever prevailed to an alarming extent and in some localities every inhabitant was sick the first Methodist class was formed in <sup>1798</sup> Chenango Pa Robt R Roberts, after Bishop Roberts, its first class leader Rev Jacob Gurnode & Rev John Mc Cllland Irish local preachers began travelling the county & preaching far & wide the distances they compassed the summer they preached & the spiritual seed they sowed is known along their shores can alike extend to forest & city In 1800 Rev P W Davis of the Batt Conf was sent to Chenango Circuit & the other 2 Irish preachers spent their time on horseback their Circuit was limited but his wide spread they travelled far but the farther

# Historical Record.

He was the type of the class of whom it is said  
"Thou art in a bare & rugged way  
Through deserts lonely wilds & stray  
Thy bounty shall my pains beguile  
The barren wilderness shall smile"

→ Although there were 8 annual Conferences in 1800 there were no fixed boundary lines and the preachers attended the Conf. most convenient to their work.

1802 → In the fall of 1802 Mr James M<sup>r</sup> Mohan from Huntington Pa settled 1 1/2 miles west of Westfield which was the first white settlement. The following spring Mr Jos M<sup>r</sup> Mohan & Mr Edward M<sup>r</sup> Henry were added to the settlement becoming members of the latter community. From 1796 - 1812 Western N.Y. was nominally in the bounds of the Philadelphia Conf. in 1807 it sent Rev Phil<sup>l</sup> Peter Van Nesh. to form a circuit called the Holland purchase Circuit embracing all that part of N.Y. lying west of the Genesee river. He was in the habit of stopping at Mr Fellows about the center of this tract. He was connected with the Church. in 1809 he had license to preach & he was among the first to preach west of Genesee river for 9 years he traveled as a local preacher over the whole Holland purchase preaching wherever he could find an ear to hear the gospel. He was after a Presby<sup>l</sup> Elder.

1809 → In 1809 Rev Geo Lane was sent to minister to the Holland Circuit - He started from Buffalo in a cutter for his field of labor. His overtook Mr Goulds his wife who were members near Sheridan having been away on a visit & were returning home. Night fell upon them while endeavoring to break through a snow drift near Callarauga Creek they turned back renewed their journey next day a class was formed at Mr Goulds consisting David Gould & wife Stephen Bush & Elyah Risley one of the first classes formed by a Conf minister in Chautauque County during this year Rev Dr Richmond a local preacher & Physician preached & practiced between Mayville & Westfield preaching once at least that year at Westfield & roads. He after removed to Westfield & lived in the ground now occupied by the Church his house <sup>more to the rear</sup> being the parsonage

# Historical Record.

In 1810 an entire class of 10 members settled in Valla Nova sending a delegate to the General Conf at Lyons N.Y. asking for preaching the Circuit year. 3 men sent. Billy Brown as he was called was one. He was a peculiar man. Had a great fancy for odd passages in scripture & was remarkable for his faith & prayer. There is no authentic account of his work. Elyah Melcoly had no stated location if he did had he did not keep it wandering off his reservation as far as Waver Pa. A class was formed at Fredonia this year consisting of Justin Newman & wife Jeremiah Paddock & wife & others. Chautauque Circuit reported 30 members this year.

Chautauque Circuit included the present town of Chymen Ropley Westfield & Mayville Forestville Sheidau. Fredonia Sundauid Sherman was so named from Chautauque lake said to be the highest water in the world 1305 feet above tide water & 725 above lake level. 16 miles in length & 10 ft in width. Mayville sits like a queen at its head. James tree refers at its feet, on a branch of the Oneida Creek which furnishes an immense water power. The name is of Indian origin of the many legends relating to it. "An Indian maid in early days he said

From from her tribe some stranger home to find

From her side Captin stole embrace she fled

He flew foot bow her on a rugged hill

Which one looked thy bawls & swiftly sped

Pursuers after. Pencil stood she there

Defied pursuers. Then plunged the bridal bed

She sought in rather there Chautauque depth so said

The name Chautauque still do they sweet water bear"

Chautauque at which embraced in that day the present town of Chymen. Ropley Westfield Mayville Forestville Sheidau Fredonia Sundauid Sherman was so named from Chautauque lake 1320 feet above tide water. The General Conf of 1812 met at Niagara N.C. July 28. Rev Benjamin G. Paddock & Samuel Lane were of 65 to Chautauque Circuit. Classes were now formed at Hanover at Orme & at North End of Chautauque lake when Dr. Richmond had his home. There was also a class at Southard which was near Switzville. Preaching was held regularly at Mayville & Home by Rev Smith a local preacher as well as by the Circuit preachers. This Rev Smith lived near the head of Chautauque lake.

# Historical Record.

He was lame once at a Tr meeting he attempted to preach for Rev 121'  
And then appeared a great wonder in the heavens &c. He had not gone far when  
he appeared braked as the preachers say, He closed by saying "Preach us many  
lessons - learn one less - You scarcely ever find them trying to get honey from a red clove  
blossom though sweeter than the white. The same is the bible as too shut. To be much  
content himself with the white. My text is a red clove blossom but my bill is too short  
I cannot reach it & I will try hereafter to content myself with what I can reach"

There must have been a class this year south of Quincy at Post's School  
House Zasha Fuller was leader. Some of the Picket family belonged here  
There was preaching & possibly a class at Pelsy Stevens where Polly  
belonged who never prayed without its ending in a show. She had  
a mount of Transfiguration & remarkable answers to her prayers especially  
in one remarkable instance in the case of a son whom she desired should  
not outlive her. In the year 1813 the Ohio Conf took charge of Chaut  
Ch. It met in Steubenville & Bp M. Henderson presiding (McKendree?)

John M. Mahan was appointed circuit preacher to have an assistant  
It comprised about the present James town & Frederick part of Erie Dist. Several  
local preachers were called in aid & success followed their work  
& at Conf the Circuit reported 150 members. The Ohio Conf of 1814  
met in Cincinnati Sept 8<sup>th</sup> Bp Abney presiding Jacob Young  
was appointed elder & Renewer, Westlake to Chaut Ch. Westlake  
was rec'd on trial this year. He labored afterwards in the Ohio Conf  
till 1836 when he was transferred to Indiana where he died in 1845

Jacob Young the elder was a peculiar though noble man. He  
attended his prayers & sermons in solemn song with strange cadences.  
He was one of the hardiest & most influential of the pioneers. Chaut  
Circuit reported 157 members this year. The Ohio Conf of 1815

met in Lebanon O. Sept 14 Bp Abney & McKendree presiding  
Jacob Young was still retained as elder & Samuel Lane to Chaut  
Circuit. It is probably there was Circuit preaching at Goodhue's

lanney a short distance S.W. of Westfield this year. also  
at Rogers S. House West Joel Clarke the leader of the class  
at Picket's settlement also. It was now a 4 weeks Circuit  
this year Jan B Finley held a quarterly meeting at Southard north  
End of Chaut later. The Circuit reported this year 322 members

The Ohio Conf of this year was held at Louisville Ky Sept 3 1816

James B Finley P.E., D.D. Davidson Ch. preacher

# Historical Record.

D D Dandrew was sick this year on trial. He had been a practicing Physician. He had a sharp shrill voice & was very effective in meetings. He spent his old age in comfort & died in Dayton Ohio about 1873. <sup>80 years of age</sup> As long as he was able to move from place to place he busied himself in selling 2 vols of his sermons which he had published. He was very fond of Coffee & he often asked for a 2 or 3 Cup by joyously exclaiming I will take a little more of the slow poison giving it "an upward, song style".

Chas C reported this year 500 members. The Ohio Conf of 1817 was held at Zanesville & J B Finley Eld P.E. & Cuth Goddard Pres Chair of the Circuit. Goddard was sick into the Conf. in Sept 1814. This year Finley held a Camp meeting at North East. When Asael Peck was crucified by hearing the song "Vain delusion world adieu" a Camp meeting had never been held here before & multitudes came from Circuit. It opened favorably & many were converted. Sabbath morn the last was & I saw the dead & the whole congregation was melted into tears & loud cries went up to heaven for mercy at night the altar was crowded. Among them were several sailors who had come down from Erie to spend Sunday in a fool's. The camp meeting sowed many a seed of life in this region & among others Asael Peck was a noble & gifted man whose children now rise up & call him blessed. Circuit reported 532 members.

The Ohio Conf of 1818 met Aug 7 at Steubenville, O. J B Finley P.E. John Sumner P.C. The latter was a very large man & rode a very fine horse who like Bucephalus of old allowed no one but his master to mount him. He was taught to follow no one who looked at him to prevent his being stolen large & powerful he was obedient to his master touch & voice. Sumner did no salary being well off. He made a suit of clothes at Gerris Fools father when they held Circuit preaching South of Zanesville New Glen miles where a clam had been in existence for some time.

J B Finley deserves a passing notice. He travelled incessantly in 1807. He attended a Camp meeting at Cave Ridge Ky a wicked & drunken city. 25000 people were present all most intensely excited. Rev Tom Penke was preaching some men singing some praying some cursing & while looking on says he a strange feeling took possession of me such as I never felt before I became so weak I had to sit down I went to the woods fell no better & returned I stepped on a log that I might better see - The sight was awful at one instant I saw 500 people swept down as if 1000 gun balls had sped upon them. The shrieks & shouts rent the very heavens my hair stood up my blood ran cold I fled to the woods & cursed the day I came I hurried away to a tavern kept by Legue Legue was never when I found a company of desperate men drinking gamboling & fighting I took a drink & left.

# Historical Record.

July I was as near Hell as I wished to be in this world or the world to come  
more in trouble than ever I spent the night in a barn in a most desolate  
state of mind finding one of my companions in the morning I said Come let  
us be off I can stand it no longer I ~~proceeded~~ <sup>at home</sup> took my way into the  
woods & prayed no sooner did my knees touch the ground than I fell my cries  
soon attracted the neighbors among them a German who prayed for me after a long  
struggle heaven took in upon my soul I cried, I laughed, I shouted no one understood  
me but my Dutch brother who had prayed for me Truly wandered away for God  
after this but seldom ~~heard~~ <sup>became</sup> one of the most laborious & faithful of mis-  
sionaries travelling over 300 miles a year in his round as P. E. The O. Conf of 1819 met  
in Cincinnati from Swazee P. E., Robt C. Nutton & Benj P. Mills, Preachers  
of ~~the~~ <sup>State</sup> ~~of~~ <sup>Chapt. Ct.</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>which latter</sup> had now been divided into Circuit ~~at~~ <sup>at</sup>  
from Silver Creek to North East (going along the lake Preaching regularly  
this year at Henry Abells also at the log haven kept by David Easton  
where the Spencer blocks now stand Nutton preached there one evening after  
he had been rolling on the floor several hours having put soap & soap  
on a brick to brush it to a lead, Preaching regularly at Gorick's Tavern  
Rogers S. N. Lodi, as Nutton's voice could be heard a mile or  
there more his days of power there was a camp meeting this year on the  
ridge above R. R. this side of depot where Barclay the drayman lives  
multitudes were converted who came to laugh. Mills was a peculiar  
<sup>while a large preacher</sup>  
man, his theme was in Forest viled when for several years he worked  
was in New on his own account He took a class for Post S. H. & formed one  
at Luncey now Repley also at Portland & strengthened there already  
formed He was of medium height, stout built, & round features dark  
hair parted in the middle his locks hung down in curls He was  
full of anecdotes which he told with effect He had been a sailor in  
his younger days & was fond of singing sailor songs This commenced  
the lamp, aulin jacket we no longer will wear

But robes of bright glory all shrouding fair

With a crown on our heads one dazzling the sun

From glory to glory triumphantly new - was a favorite with his  
another legend - I'll tell you why I love the Methodists

Because they sing & show the best.

He was known and justified as Crazy Mills

He died triumphantly at Forest viled in 1840 aged 65

# Historical Record.

The claret Red school House met of town were Job Clarke + wife Fathes  
Walrusk. David Burgen Asael Peck + wife Fathes Fuller Ely Stevens  
The General Cong met first time with their Act attached at Niagara  
in 1820. July 20. Gideon Doaper P.E. John Summerville + Benj  
P. Hill Pr on Lake Circuit Preacher at Westfield at New  
Abells at Westfield still among members John Bradley of fine

A singular circumstance occurred this year in the experience of Afford  
Bromson. He had made an appointment to preach in the house of Amos Smith  
Hubbard O. (who had become quite feeble) for this especial benefit on his way to the  
House he felt impressed with the words I am now ready to be offered + the terms  
of my departure is at hand He concluded it would not be proper under the cir-  
cumstances it would look too much like a funeral service before the man was  
dead. He could think of no other text he was shut up to this provided to preach  
at close Fathes Smith spoke with much feeling, exhorted + @ at the close sat down  
thru his head back gasped + was dead, a back slidden member was revived  
+ was killed 2 days after at a raising General Cong met at Paris N.Y.

July 19 1821. Gideon Fillmore P.E. Nathaniel Reed + Ira  
Bromson Preacher of Lake Circuit the first named was admitted  
1818 excellent man good preacher health poor Ira B admitted year  
before deformed in person, performed valuable service. Camp meeting at  
Red Oak House beyond Leffingwell place. Lorenzo Dow preached man  
connected who was so happy that he unconsciously climbed Hubbard's  
tree + remained there a long time Preaching at Phi Stevens Polly  
Cantener to be wonderfully blessed Indeed Polly was one of the saints  
of this region 60 years ago. 1822 General Cong met at Vermont N.Y.

July 24. Gideon Fillmore P.E. Rich Wright + Sylvester Cary Pr's  
first admitted 1820 noble man - good preacher - native talent  
Sylvester Cary admitted this year. Complaint of a heavy boiler  
Methodist fire - same + slow. story told of Fillmore dreamed he  
wanted to cross the Ferry at Frankton. Strain with stood in the  
Boat called the Ferry man. Made a loud + loud Halls to bring  
the ferry man - wote up - + every body else man of house raked  
in in great alarm - When Fillmore could be heard 2 miles while  
preaching without effort on his part what must have been the effect

now 1823. Gideon Fillmore P.E. Parker Paul + Rich Wright preachers  
1824 Gideon Fillmore P.E. Josiah Keys Preacher of Lake Cir.  
Set off to the Pittsburg Cong. Harris Munson Leader at Red S. N.  
Noah Berdan - Mr Debbyshire Sumner Pelcher + wife among the  
members there

Condit  
Place →

# Historical Record.

1825 from Swayze P.E. Henry Knapp + John Scott <sup>Preachers</sup> ~~members~~  
Preaching at Father Eby's next house built the pile farm Franklin  
Abell committed. Arad Pickett wife walked 12 miles to take his sisters  
from Pseudogast + from Farms north. 1826. Wm Swayze P.E.  
Job Wilson Jno P Kent. Preachers. Class formed at Portland Harbor  
Hocle Beadle class leader. abegal. Julia Rhoda Sally Beadle  
Mary Goodrich Ann Shaw. Emily + Hannah Lupper. Minerva Pratt Rachel Pratt  
Eleanor Curlew Chauncy Beadle Elnathan Bristol  
1827. Pittsburg Conf at Newbury V. Aug 22. W Swayze P.E.  
Joseph J Barris Zachariah Rogers. Pr. Wm Swayze was born in <sup>asbury</sup>  
avillage in New Jersey Nov 18 1784 when 17 he went to Baltimore happened in a  
M.E. Ch. Rev J Chamber the preacher, as he stood on a scaffold fainting  
day after day he felt a great load, something touched his forehead his load  
was gone. Every thing glorious new city new creation, began to preach - went  
thruout N York + Mass + Vt. preaching with  
wonderful power + success, gathered at one time 50 to 100 penitents at the altar  
but more to heaven for later Ch. than any man in his time wonderful  
at Camp meeting In 1824 superannuated Home in Ohio, has since died  
1828. Pittsburg Conf at Salem, Aug 21. Bp Roberts. Wm B Macle <sup>P.E.</sup>  
Joseph J Barris Daniel Ayres Preachers. Many Camp meetings this year  
Villa Nova gathered 80 Frostville 100 Chaut Ct 100 Madville 100  
The Church was begun this year over on the Westside the ground  
at former when the Brick Church now stands (1877) Wm Smith  
then owned by Henry Abell, was offered as a gift to the society but as  
majority living on West side the site was changed after much of  
the lumber for the building had been hauled on the ground.  
I have now brought this record down to the memory of many now  
living + hope some successor will write the history of the  
Church building period of Westfield Chape from 1829 - 1870  
J H Brown (1877)  
Church building Period of M. E. Ch Westfield -