

## LEST WE FORGET

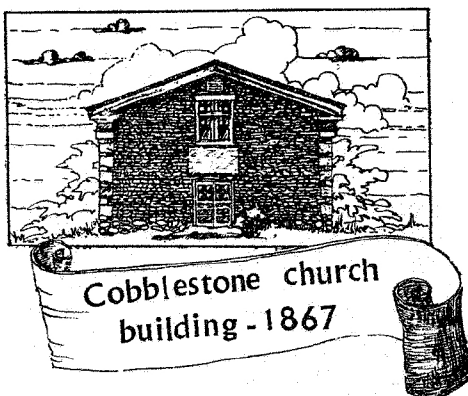
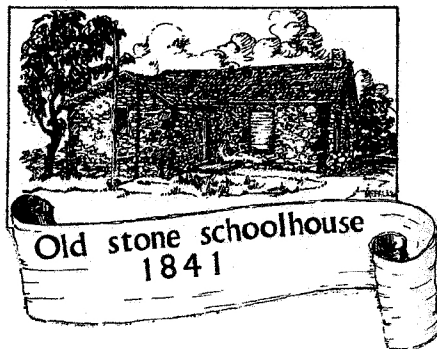
In celebrating our achievements of recent years we must not forget the early history of our church which provided a long line of devoted people who laid the foundation for our church of today.

Briefly, let us turn back our thoughts to the beginning of our adventure in corporate Christian Worship. Around the year 1840 Methodist Circuit Riders were visiting the farming areas of western New York endeavoring to develop units of worship.

In this area, a few families had been meeting for worship in the Stone School House which was located on Long Pond Rd. about a quarter mile north of Maiden Lane. Rev. William Williams was their leader.

Sensing their sincerity, he called a meeting for Sunday the 25th of July 1841 to consider the formation of a Methodist Protestant Church. Just a few years ago a notebook was discovered which contains the minutes of that historic meeting and also church records for several years thereafter. (See inside front cover)

As membership gradually increased over the years, three different buildings were used as houses of worship. A more detailed history of these early years is recorded in a publication "Ye Are God's Building" which was published in 1953.



With this brief tribute to the past we must relate the exciting growth years known to our present generation.

In 1948 Dr. James F. Bisgrove became our minister just as the post-war years were bringing many new residents to our community and many new members to our church.

Because of his excellent ministry the church soon became overcrowded and two Sunday services were necessary.

In 1951 the Official Board established a "Building Fund" but little did they realize where the path would lead in the years ahead.

At first it was thought that the old church could be enlarged with an educational building added to the east. Following many lengthy meetings and after listening to numerous questionable suggestions Merton McNeil proposed a radical idea. "Let us scrap these patched-up plans," he said, "and build a new church that will show our faith and will be a fitting heritage for our children and the coming generations." That turned the tide and plans for a new sanctuary were authorized.

Dr. Bisgrove, then past retirement age, could foresee the busy years ahead and realized that a younger minister should take up the work. At that time, however, the building needs were well defined and an architect was about to be hired.

