

HISTORY OF ORLEANS COUNTY CHURCHES

TOWN OF SHELBY

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HISTORY OF ORLEANS COUNTY CHURCHES

by

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Town of Shelby

The Town of Shelby was set off from Ridgeway, March 6, 1818, and was then a part of Genesee County. When the State formed the County of Orleans from Genesee, November 12, 1824, Shelby was not included, but was made a part of Orleans on April 5, 1825. It is the middle one of the 3 towns bordering Genesee County.

The religious history of Shelby is interesting as such a diversity of Protestant Churches were formed there during the early nineteenth century. Included were the only Friend's Meeting and the only Church founded by descendants of Palatinate refugees in the County. The pioneers who settled Shelby were devoted to education and the worship of God. School houses were built very soon after their own log cabins, and were used as places of worship on Sundays. The population of Shelby had reached 3046 at the time of the 1855 census and at that date 10 Churches had been organized there. During the nineteenth century 12 Churches were formed and 14 houses of worship built. Before the close of the century 4 of the Church societies had died out. The 12 Churches were one each of Baptist, Congregational, Friends or Quakers as they were often called, Christian Evangelical Lutheran, Freewill Baptists, Advent and Presbyterian and four Methodist Episcopal in various parts of the town. There were no Roman Catholic Churches in Shelby as there were no Catholics among the early settlers. When they began to come into the town a little later there was an established R. C. Church in nearby Medina which they attended.

In 1970 only two of those Churches are still active. Two of the earliest to be organized in the Town are still carrying on their Christian witness in these troubled times. They are The First Baptist Church of Shelby and the Millville United Methodist Church. There is also one twentieth century Church with a strong program, working in Shelby. This is the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church whose recently erected edifice is on Shelby Basin Road .

Of the 14 meeting houses erected in the past only two are in use today for the purpose for which they were built. They of course have during the years been much improved and fitted to meet present needs. Others still standing are the Friends' fine cobblestone building, now empty after being used for many years as a country store; the brick edifice the Christians of West Shelby built, now a country store; the Advent building at East Shelby , now the Fireman's hall; the vacant Methodist building at East Shelby; the Millville Congregational edifice, used as a farm storage; the Lutheran building later known as Fletcher Chapel and used by several different Churches, now empty and in poor condition. Four of the old buildings were torn down and two were destroyed by fire, while in use as churches and were replaced.

SHELBY MEETING OF FRIENDS AT MILLVILLE

A number of families of Friends, or Quakers as other people usually called them, apparently settled in the township of Shelby at an early date. Little is known about these people. County Histories state that a "Meeting of Friends existed in Millville in 1818." They give a few other facts about their organization but do not give the names of those early members. So it is impossible to learn when they settled in Shelby or when they died or moved away. Evidently the members prospered and increased in numbers for some years, for after meeting in the homes of members for more than 20 years they built a meeting house. LANDMARKS OF ORLEANS COUNTY, states that in "1841 they erected a stone church building" From the same source we learn the names of two of their preachers, "Reuben Haines and Mary Thistlethwait, who perhaps were members of the local group. Many of the early members had died during the passing years and others had moved away. Evidently the Friends had not won new members to replace those they had lost, for history reports that in 1870 the Society had become so weak that it disbanded. In 1874 the building was sold to a newly organized Presbyterian Society in Millville.

Apparently, before the end of the following decade the few remaining Friends around Millville had greatly prospered or else new families of that faith moved into the area, for in 1884 the Meeting of Friends reorganized and bought back their house of worship from the Presbyterians who were no longer holding services. Mrs. E. G. Underhill was the preacher and probably the one who revived the society. The Friends never discriminated against women holding positions of leadership as most Churches of that time did. Mrs. Underhill continued as preacher for seven or eight years and was followed by George Hull. In 1887 they repaired the building and refitted it to conform to their simple mode of worship. Services were continued through 1893, after which the members no longer gathered together. When LANDMARKS OF ORLEANS COUNTY was published in 1894 the author stated that there were about 15 members of the society of Friends still living.

Although the Friends have long since disappeared from Shelby, they left a notable landmark in Millville. The "stone church building" they erected in 1841 was of excellent cobblestone construction and still stands in 1970, during a period when that distinctive Western New York type of building has become quite famous. In 1896 Truman Waite bought the building and converted it into a country store. County records show that the deed was signed on Feb. 27, 1896 by William Fox of Elba and Henry P. Sanburn of Shelby, "as trustees of the Shelby Preparative Meeting of Friends, held at Millville, N. Y.". The Millville Post Office was located in the old meeting house for some years after it became a store. After changing hands several times the place was purchased by Howard Neal in 1926. Mr. and Mrs. Neal continued to operate the store in the old Friends Cobblestone Meeting House for more than forty years until he became seriously ill in June 1969. Mr. Neal died Sept. 19, 1969. The nearly 130 year old building now stands empty.

HISTORY OF ORLEANS COUNTY CHURCHES

Shelby Baptist Church 1818 - 1970

The Shelby Baptist Church is one of the earliest Orleans County Churches which is still active in 1970. The first record we find of Baptists in Shelby is on May 30, 1818 when a group of people met at the home of Joseph Hagaman to consider plans for forming a Baptist Church. The Town of Shelby had been set off from Ridgeway only a few weeks earlier, on March 6, and was then a part of Genesee County. At that first meeting Elizabeth Hagaman was received as a candidate for baptism. Several others were received at a meeting on June 29 and they were all baptized on July 1.

On July 25 the group met again at the Hagaman cabin to make definite plans for organization as a Church. James Carpenter was elected moderator of the meeting and articles of faith were adopted. James Carpenter and David Burroughs were elected as a committee to arrange to have the society recognized as a Baptist Church by proper authority. Evidently they attended to the matter promptly, for on July 28, the Rev. Simeon Dutcher, pastor of the only Baptist Church in the area at that time, at Gaines, met with the congregation and organized them as a duly constituted Baptist Church. James Carpenter, a devout Christian, good preacher and a man of keen intelligence although little formal education, was the first pastor and served for fifteen years with great consecration. He was ordained by the Church May 15, 1819. He supported his family by his labor like the other pioneers and served the Church without compensation. The membership increased under his leadership even though a number withdrew to help form new Churches. Like most pioneer Churches the Shelby Baptist Church drew her membership from a wide area and in 1822 a number requested letters of dismission in order to help organize a Baptist Church in Royalton, Niagara County. Again in 1829, when the Medina Baptists organized, a group of Shelby Church members living nearer Medina withdrew to that fellowship. The Church continued to grow and prosper so that after fifteen years of meeting in the homes of members they decided to build a house of worship.

The building erected in 1833 was located on the northeast corner at the intersection of the Harrison and South Gravel Roads, about a mile south of Shelby Center. It was a small building but had a considerable seating capacity, for like many early meeting houses it had galleries built around three sides of the room. The cost of building was \$1800.00 which was raised partly by donation and partly by public auction of the pews. With a building of their own the members now organized a Sunday School. Also Samuel Gilbert followed Rev. Carpenter as pastor. With a building to keep up and a pastor's salary to pay, the members now had financial problems. One method used for a time was to estimate the worth of the members and average the Church expenses. In 1834 a member refused to pay his "average" so the hand of fellowship was withdrawn from him by the Church. In those days most Churches refused to keep members on the Church roll who failed to meet their obligations as members and Christians.

In 1843, during the pastorate of Alanson Draper, a division arose in the Shelby Church and several members and the pastor withdrew from the fellowship and organized a Free Will Baptist Church in Shelby. A new pastor was secured and the Church continued to grow. During those early years women were never mentioned in Church records except on membership rolls. The men held all the offices, attended to all business and women were not even allowed to vote. In 1854 re -

modeling the church was considered but the membrs were unable to raise the necessary funds. In 1857 the Shelby Church was to entertain the annual meeting of the Orleans Baptist Association. At that time and for many years thereafter, these were two day meetings and the entertaining Church provided free hospitality to all who attended. Some time in advance, it was decided to "clean the meeting house by a general turnout of the members". They evident-also planned to make some repairs, for there is a record of the committees appointed, as follows:

Elder Pettit to mend the roof and plastering. (The pastor appears to have been given the most difficult task)

Brother Parsons to get white washing done.

Brother Allen get lumber for staging.

Brothers Ryan and Botsford to provide accomodations for visit-Brethren.

Brothers S. D. Ross and T. J. Coon to provide feed for teams.

Brothers J. Letts, J. Coon, H. Ryan and T. Botsford to provide seats for the congregation.

Brothers J. Letts, D. Fuller, J. Ross and M. Allen to arrange tables.

Brothers D. Wildy and L. A. Brace to secure teams.

Deacon J. Letts, Deacon Norman Brace and Brothers William Dewey and E. B. Parsons with our pastor to represent this Church in the Association.

Although only men were appointed on the committees it is quite certain that the women did the scrubbing and window washing to clean the meeting house and also had their own homes in the best order for entertaining the delegates over night. They must also have prepared large amounts of food with which to load the tables the men arranged for dinner and supper the first day and dinner the second day of the meeting.

The Church must have continued to grow in numbers and prosperity, for in December 1861 it was voted to attempt to build "a more commodious house of worship." At that time some of the members felt that it would be wiser to build in the village than at the old site. The subscription paper on which members and friends were to pledge gifts to the building fund was made out with two columns, one for the old site and the other for Shelby Center, with the understanding that the site for which the larger sum was pledged would decide the location of the new edifice. The Center site won out and all worked together to accomplish the task.

Volney Acer gave the site with the stipulation that a picket fence be built around the grounds. William Morgan of Somerset was the architd. The meeting house was built at a cost of about \$260 including the bell. The dedicattion was held on Feb, 25, 1863 with the Rev. George Dana Boardman of Rochester preaching the sermon. The Church was very happy to entertain the annual meeting of the Associ that summer in their new house of worship. Two years later the picket fence was built around the grounds at a cost of \$400. Additional land was purchased from the Acers on which to build horse sheds, a necessary adjunct for every country church in those days. Also in 1865 the first parsonage was purchased. During the difficult Civil War years when some Churches were hardly able to survive, the Baptists of Shelby grew in membership and built up their excellent property.

During the passing years pastors and members were also studying the Bible and striving to live the teachings of Christ in their dai

lives. They provided Christian instruction for the children and young people and attempted to win those outside the Church to faith in Christ as Saviour. They supported the Home and Foreign Mission work of the denomination. On April 30, 1871, a little girl, Clara McDonald, was baptized into the membership of the Church. Years later she and her husband, John Ross also of Shelby, founded the White Light Mission and served there for many years. Mrs. Ross was known by many who found God in that Buffalo Mission, as Mother Ross. The influence of the Shelby Baptist Church touched many lives.

The spiritual work of the Church determined alterations and enlargement of the physical property. As the Sunday School grew the need for more space was considered for some time. In 1882 a room, 20 by 30 feet was added to the east end of the meeting house. It was used not only for Sunday School but for prayer meetings and by various Church organizations. Five years later the old parsonage was sold and with an additional \$700 a more convenient home for the pastor was purchased. That same year the envelope system of giving was adopted. Repairs were made from time to time as needed and in 1904 the brick edifice was extensively renovated at a cost of \$1200. The following year electric lighting was installed. When the building was erected a box containing some historical records of the Church was placed in the cornerstone. For some reason this box was removed during repairs in 1904 and not replaced. In 1919, Mrs. John Bleekman was asked to write a history of the Church. After being approved by vote of the members this was placed in the box which was again sealed in the cornerstone.

In 1912, some years after the Free Will Baptist Church had disbanded, Mary Childs Eckerson bought the property and gave the use of it to the Ladies Aid Society. The building was fixed so it was a convenient place for Church Suppers, all sorts of social affairs and was also used for young people's rallies and Daily Vacation Bible School. During the redcoration of their Church edifice in 1914 and again a decade later services were held in that building. By the mid-1930s the old church was in need of costly repairs and the Ladies Aid gave up using it.

During the pastorate of the Rev, N. W. Wolcott the Shelby Baptists celebrated the centennial of their organization as a Church on July 28, 1918. The special speakers were two former members of the Church, Mrs. Clara Ross, "Mother Ross", of the White Light Mission in Buffalo and Dr. Herbert S. Weet, Superintendent of Schools in Rochester.

When the Baptist denomination held the New World Mission Campaign for a great advance in missionary giving after the close of World War I, the Shelby Church exceeded her quota of \$3268 in pledges to be paid over a five year period.

The Church has supported strong youth programs, especially during the present century. The young people had the opportunity for worship service to others, self expression and wholesome recreation in the Christian Endeavor Society for many years, followed by the Baptist Young People's Union, The Fellowship Class and in recent years, the Baptist Youth Fellowship.

Music has always been a vital part of the worship of the congregation, with many people giving of their talent. The outstanding contribution of two members of the Church should be mentioned. Dr. J.

Fred Eckerson with his violin, and his wife, Hattie Weet Eckerson, with her fine voice and organ playing added much to the expression of praise to God for many years. They also found and encouraged musical talent both in the Church and the community and the Shelby Orchestra was widely known at that period. Later, during the pastorate of the Rev. J. C. Rawson, his daughter Edna contributed generously, not only by her beautiful singing but in organizing and training a choral group of which gave many sacred concerts for special Church events. This Chorus also presented many public sacred concerts and the donations given by appreciative audiences were placed in a fund which made possible the purchase of a fine organ in December 1947. The love of good music and the excellent training of voices continued to bless the Church long after the departure of the Rawsons.

The nearly 12 year pastorate of the Rev. J. C. Rawson was a time of accomplishment for the Church in many ways. His Christian living and teaching were an inspiration to both Church and community. His energy and practical ability helped to make possible improvements to the property and his fine family helped in every way. In 1941 during the redecoration of the Church, the sanctuary was made more beautiful by replacing the old windows with new memorial ones, new lighting fixtures given by a Lockport Church which was remodeling, and a lovely design worked out in stained glass from a Church in Wellsville, on the wall above the pulpit platform. The cost of the project was kept low by the many gifts and donations and the labor of pastor and family and many Church members. A rededication service was held in December.

The Shelby Church had never had a baptistry in their building. In early years baptisms were held at nearby streams. Later, baptismal services were held in the Medina Baptist Church. After the death of Alice Colman a large group of young people with whom she had worked in BYF and as their Sunday School teacher, raised money to buy materials for a baptistry as a memorial to her. The work of constructing the baptistry was done by The Rev. Rawson and the Rev. Evans of Glad Tidings Church in Medina. At the same time a painting on the wall back of the baptitry, done by Batavia artist, Nina Mason Booth, was given by Edith Colman and Ethel Eskelson, sisters of Alice Colman, also in her memory. The dedication service was held in April 1946.

In 1948 the Rev. Rawson was followed by William E. Towner, a Colgate-Rochester Divinity School student who served for three years. He was ordained to the Christian ministry at an impressive ceremony in October 1950. He was the fifth minister to be ordained in the Shelby Church. The others were the Revs. James Carpenter in 1819, Samuel Stimson in 1843, W. H. Hartigan in 1888 and Charles Harrington in 1891.

The sanctuary was again redecorated in 1957. At that time cherry wainscoting and matching doors were installed. Some of the old floor joists had to be replaced before a new floor was laid. At about the same time the congregation added long needed space for Sunday School and social programs by the purchase of the Shelby school property conveniently located next to the church. Parking space was also acquired by this action. Soon afterward the men refinished the interior and gas heat was installed in both buildings. Through the years memorial gifts have added many beautiful and useful appointments to the sanctuary and in 1961, the women who had been working for years on the project, finally had enough money to purchase red carpet which was in place in time for Christmas services.

While the Shelby Church was without a pastor in 1966 the official

board asked for help from the Baptist State Convention to secure a pastor. The Rev. Edward Gunther and other members of the State staff met with them to consider the situation. They advised a religious census of the area and helped with planning. About a dozen members of the Church worked for some weeks on the census and when it was completed they were very much aware that the Shelby Church had a mission to perform. As a means of being able to support a full time pastor to lead them in the task, Mr Gunther and others helped them plan a complete every member canvass and tithing enlistment program with the result that the Church income was doubled. The Rev. Carl Dawkins, who was serving as interim pastor at this time, did much to build up the Church. In addition to conducting regular Sunday services he held evangelistic services, and a training class for Church membership. He and his wife made extra trips from their home in Niagara Falls to call on people and 10 were added to the membership. In the fall of 1967 Mr Gunther put the Church in contact with the Rev. Daniel E. Mohnkern who accepted a call from the Church.

The Rev. and Mrs Mohnkern moved into the parsonage and he was installed as pastor at a special service on Dec. 10, 1967. He is carrying on a most active ministry to Church and community with his wife always ready with a helping hand. By calling in the homes they have become acquainted with the people and let them know that the pastor is available to all who need him. He has organized a choir which he directs and established a midweek Bible study meeting and is an excellent preacher. Under the leadership of the Mohnkerns the Shelby Church in 1968 feels ready to serve God in their area better than ever before.

The First Baptist Church of Shelby has in 1968 a membership of 68. The Sunday worship service is held at 11 A. M. Sunday School at 10 A. Bible Study meeting at 7:30 P. M. Wed. Women's Society meeting on the second Tuesday each month. A Daily Vacation Bible School for the children has been held every summer for many years.

Officers: Clerk - Miss Edith Colman, Treas.- Mrs. George W. Grape
Chairman Bd. of Trustees - Carl T. Hanks, Chrmn. Bd. of Deacons - Edwin Woodbridge. S. S. Supt. Mrs. Albert Bush.

Pastors since 1818: The Revs. James Carpenter., Samuel Gilbert, Alanson Draper, Samuel W. Stimson, William Branch, L. H. Gibbs, C. Hatch, William Putnam, W. D. Carban, Harvey Pettit, Merrill Forbes, G. Starkweather, E. Edwards, E. Donovan, G. N. Sears, D. J. Bailey, W. H. Hartigan, T. N. Smith, C. H. Harrington, C. H. Howes, Abner Morrill, Fred M. Clay, J. G. Black, William Tompkins, Perry Evans, E. D. Chapman, W. N. Wolcott, H. C. Hayward, Harland Tuttle, Verno Ellzey, Atwood Allen, James O. Smith, John Courtright, (Interim) G. Manhold, J. C. Rawson, William Towner, Theodore M. Leach, Kenneth G. Baker, Henry Klaassen, Carl E. Dawkins, Daniel E. Mohnkern
Dec. 1967 -

Most of the facts for the history of this Church were given by Miss Edith Colman of Shelby Center, a member of the First Baptist Church of Shelby for many years.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF MILLVILLE

LANDMARKS OF ORLEANS COUNTY gives the information that the little village of Millville had three organized Churches in 1820 in addition to the Society of Friends. A study of records reveals, however, that this is not entirely correct. The Methodists had begun holding preaching services in 1816 and organized as a Church in 1820. The Presbyterians and Congregationalists together, formed a Presbyterian Church on Nov. 15, 1820, under the guidance of the Rev. Alanson Darwin. It was received into the care of the Presbytery of Rochester on April 17, 1821. A few years later the Church was transferred to Niagara Presbytery.

Charter members were Nathan Sherwood, Joseph Wyman, Chester Frost, Orange Wells, Leonard Dresser, John Burns, Joshua Church Betsey Wyman, Elsy Frost, Lucy Sherwood, Zivia Foote, Sally Elwell, Timothy Johnson, Jane Burns, Harvey Elwell, Benjamin Darling and Esther Darling. Other members were soon added. Many of these people had come from Congregational Churches in New England and preferred that form of Church government so after a few years they reorganized as a Congregational Church and changed their name accordingly. As there was no Association of Congregational Churches in the area they remained with Niagara Presbytery under the so-called accommodation plan. A log school house had been built in Millville in 1817 and there this Church worshiped alternately with the Methodists. Actually most members of both Churches usually attended every service. When the log school house was replaced by a larger building the congregations worshiped there,

The Holland Land Co. had offered grants of land to the first religious society organized in each town. In Shelby the Baptists and the Congregationalists applied for the grant at the same time so it was divided between them and each received 50 acres in 1822. It is probable that the money received from the sale of that land, a few years later, encouraged the Congregational Church to raise the rest of the money needed to build their own house of worship. In 1832 they built it on the north side of the road a short distance west of the four corners. The Church prospered and increased in membership. In 1848 they built a larger edifice on the second lot west of the corners, on the south side of the road. T. O. Castle who owned the corner lot and operated a general store there, bought the first meeting house and moved it to his property where it was used for many years as the Good Templars' hall. The new church was built at a cost of \$2,000.

For twenty-two years the congregationalists carried on their active ministry there. Their Sunday School had been started in 1825 while they were still using the school house for services. July 9, 1870 the frame church was destroyed by fire caused by the explosion of a kerosene lamp. The Methodists offered the use of their church to the congregation and at the first service, trustee Jonathan L. Root announced a meeting of all the male members of the Church to consider rebuilding. The men all attended and voted to build a new edifice of brick as soon as the grounds could be cleaned up. The trustees, J. L. Root, W. L'Hommedieu and D. L. Linsley were appointed as the building committee. Guy Sherwood, C. M. Chapin, G. P. Linsley, T. O. Castle and Rev. W. G. Hubbard, the pastor, were named as the fund raising committee. The brick church was erected that same year, completed and furnished at a cost of \$7,000. It was

dedicated, free from debt, on January 25, 1871. Members of the Church and congregation gave very liberally to pay all the building costs in such a short time. Also much of the labor of construction had been done by volunteers. In 1875 J. L. Root donated a bell for the edifice and that same year an organ was purchased and sheds to shelter the horses of worshipers were built. In 1884 the auditorium was repainted and frescoed according to the style of that time.

It has been impossible to learn anything about the religious programs of this Church but judging from the fine edifice they erected so quickly after the uninsured loss by fire of their former building, the Congregational Church must have had a strong organization in 1870. Also the improvements that were made during the following decade and a half would seem to indicate continuing vigor. It is therefore surprising to note the suddenness with which the Congregational Church of Millville collapsed about 1900 when it was discovered that their pastor was a man of low moral character. Other Churches have survived similar unhappy experiences. Services were discontinued and the Society disintegrated except for a skeletal organization which met occasionally in order to hold the property. The building was used for some community social affairs and as a meeting place for the Millville I.O.G. T. lodge for some years. It was sold to Glenn Pask in 1935 for use as a farm storage. Before it was sold some of the Church furniture was given to the Millville Methodist Church. In 1970 this well constructed century old building still stands and is now owned by Richard Cook and used as a farm storage.

Pastors who served the Congregational Church of Millville until 1894, after which there are no records, were: Revs. E. Fairbanks, J. Winchester, A. Rawson, W. P. Kendrick, E. Raymond, R. Dunning, Mr. Chapin, S. A. Rawson, E. B. Benedict, E. W. Kellogg, D. J. B. Hoyt, W. Glover, C. S. Shattuck, W. Tyler, E. Colton, N. Y. Yeomans, L. S. Atkins, W. G. Hubbard, L. B. Rogers, Charles Drake, W. H. Yarrow, and G. W. Grush.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MILLVILLE 1874 - 1884

The Congregational Church of Millville had always included Presbyterians in the membership and all had worked together for many years. In 1874 nineteen Presbyterians withdrew from the old Society and were organized by the Rev. D. Weisner of Niagara Presbytery, as the Presbyterian Church of Millville. They purchased the Friends' meeting house and spent \$1,000 on repairs and furnishing it for their worship. They held their services there for a number of years. The name of only one of their pastors can be found. The Rev. A. J. Wilcox was serving this Church in 1879. It is quite probable that the Congregational Church pastor also preached for the Presbyterians most of the time. In 1884 they sold their house of worship back to the reorganized Meeting of Friends.

No other records of the Presbyterian Church of Millville can be found. It is not known whether the members decided to return to their former Church, or if their organization simply died out within ten years.

THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SHELBY

This Lutheran Church was formed at an unknown date by a group of descendants of Palitinate refugees who fled from Germany during bitter religious persecution. In 1711 six or seven hundred of the refugees were the first white people to settle in Schoharie County. A little more than a century later some of their descendants came to Shelby and settled along a road now known as Fletcher Chapel Road. The exact date of their coming does not seem to be recorded.

These people had been members of Evangelical Lutheran Churches back in Schoharie County. In their new homes they met together to worship God according to their custom, perhaps without even organizing a Church for some years. At some date they did form a Church, for we find the following record in the Book of Incorporations of Religious Societies, in the Orleans County Clerk's Office.

Shelby, August 6, 1842.

"According to legal notice, previously given, a meeting of the mail members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Shelby was held this evening at the home of Caroline Moyer of the town of Shelby for the purpose of Electing Trustees for said Church and Congregation. The meeting being called to order, Jacob Moyer was appointed moderator and David S. Waldron clerk, who was also to prelide over the election, receiving the votes.

The meeting also proceeded to the election of Trustees by ballot. Upon receiving the votes of the electors, it appeared that that Abraham Bouck, John Ekerson and Stephen Coley were duly elected by a plurality of votes. Said Trustees then divided themselves into the following classes, Vis: Abraham^{Bouck} the first Class, John Ekerson the second Class, Stephen Coley the third Class.

The above Trustees are to be known by the name of the Trustees of The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Town of Shelby in the County of Orleans and State of New York.

We certify the above to be a true and faithful record of the proceedings of the above meeting and election.

Given under our hands and seals this sixth day of Aug. in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-two.

Jacob Moyer L. S.
David S. Waldron L. S."

Recorded Oct. 8, 1842

As the "mail" members of the Church met at the home of Caroline Moyer, we assume that they had not yet built a house of worship. A deed recorded later that same year supports this theory.

"November 28, 1842, Caroline moyer, Jacob Moyer and Eliza Moyer in County of Orleans, State of New York: to Abraham Bouck, John Ekerson and Stephen Coley, Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Shelby, in consideration of \$37 granted bargained and sold, convey that land situate, lying and being in the Co. of Orleans, State of New York, being part of lot 35 containing one acre, be the same more or less, together with all rights

signed by Caroline Moyer
Jacob Moyer
Eliza Moyer"

Recorded Nov. 29, 1842

The lot deeded by the Moyers to the Trustees of the Lutheran Church was on the north side of the road along which these people had settled and about two and one half miles west of East Shelby. The frame meeting house was probably ^{built} there in the spring of 1843. Part of the lot was used as a burying ground by the Lutherans and others in the area. From LANDMARKS OF ORLEANS COUNTY one gets the impression that this house of worship was built much earlier, for the book states that they worshiped there for many years. However, it agrees with other evidence that this Evangelical Lutheran Society ceased to hold regular services about 1850. Apparently they only used their building for a decade or less. The same County History also contains the statement, "About 1855 services began to be regularly held by the Methodists. Without any formal acquisition of the property it came to be the house of worship of a Methodist society". A careful search of records in the County Clerk's office reveals some facts which refute that statement.

On July 10, 1847 a judgement was made against the Trustees of the Evangelical Lutheran Church for failure to pay a debt of \$178.74 and the Sheriff of Orleans County was ordered to hold a sale of the property on Oct. 30, 1847 unless the debt was paid before that date. The Trustees named at that time were John Eckerson and Abraham Bouck.

The Sheriff's Sale is recorded on Oct. 30, 1847. Sheriff Aram Beebe sold the property to satisfy the judgement, to John Eckerson for \$211.90, he being the highest bidder. As John Eckerson was one of the trustees of the Church, the Lutheran services continued to be held in the building as long as the Society maintained regular worship. Many of the older members had died by this time and younger ones moved away so a few years later the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Shelby ceased to exist. The house of worship they erected still stands in 1970 and has been used by several different congregations. There is no record of any of the Lutheran pastors.

The people of the community wished to worship God and Methodist services were held there soon after the Lutheran services were discontinued. John Eckerson was a religious man and welcomed the new group to the building which he owned. When the Methodist Church was organized he apparently became a member. In 1862 he was one of the Trustees of Fletcher Chapel and Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church to which he and his wife Maria, deeded the property for \$40 as recorded in the County Clerk's Office in Albion.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF WEST SHELBY

The Rev. Aaron Cornish organized a Christian Church in the school house of Joint District No. 4 which was partly in western Shelby and and partly in eastern Royalton, Niagara County, on March 21, 1834. The charter members of this Society, known as the second Christian Church in Royalton, were: Lewis Follet, Wm. Roberts, Daniel Childs, Maria Childs, James Freeman, Sally Freeman, Abigail Cook, Eliza Follet, Mary Ann Lowell, Daniel O. Lee, Sally Lee, Sally Osburn, Anna Valentine, Mrs. Chase, J. D. Childs, Samuel Gould, Amasa Stone and Mary Ann Shelp.

At a meeting on March 5, 1841, the society voted to build a meeting house and chose a site in Shelby on the farm of Abiel Bowen. The work was supervised by Trustees Abiel Bowen, John Shelp and Simon Letts and the wooden edifice was completed that year. As their place of worship was now in Shelby, the name of the Church was changed to The First Christian Church of Shelby on June 3, 1843. The Church prospered and continued to worship in their meeting house for 27 years until it was destroyed by fire on January 20, 1869,

The congregation decided to rebuild as soon as possible and authorized the trustees to use their judgement as to the type of building and to supervise the construction. The new brick church was completed at a cost of \$3,200 before the end of the year and dedicated by the Rev. Warren Hathaway. The trustees at that time were: Giles Phelps, W. O. Holdridge, Daniel Childs, and Alonzo Davis.

One of the charter members was ordained to the ministry by the Central New York Conference of Christian Churches on Jan. 18 1838, in the Church at West Groton. This was J. D. Childs who returned to Shelby two years later and became pastor of his home Church, which belonged to The Western New York Conference. During his pastorate in 1850, a Sunday School with 40 members was organized in the West Shelby Church with a library of 60 volumes. Churches at that time served as centers of culture as well as worship and most of them encouraged good reading by maintaining libraries. By 1879, the Shelby Christian Sunday School enrollment had increased to 90 with a library of 200 books. Rev. Childs survived all the other charter members of the Church which he served as pastor for 20 years, shorter pastorates in other Christian Churches. He was also a successful farmer. From the Jan. 25, 1900 issue of the Medina Tribune we learn that "Jefferson Decatur Childs D.D. LL.D., who was born in Perinton, Monroe Co. May 15, 1816, died at his home in Shelby Ja. 19, 1900. The Rev. W. Warner of West Shelby Christian Church officiated at the funeral, assisted by the Revs. C. H. Howes and F. Butterfield."

Apparently this once strong Church died out soon after 1900. It is not mentioned in an Orleans County Directory for 1903 which lists other Shelby Churches and no one can be found in 1969 who remembers when it when it closed. It was sold in 1945 and made into a grocery store which is now owned by Edwin Ivan Caleb.

Pastors who served the First Christian Church of Shelby were: The Revs. Aaron Cornish, Amos Freeman, Sylvester Pervier, Chester Covill, Asa Morrison, James Knight, J. D. Childs, J. H. Currier, J. F. Wade, Jothan Morse, J. W. Lawton, Ansel Bourne, H. Rhodes, W. Vreeland, F. R. Wade, Frank Wing, Mr. Somers, D. W. Moore, Elias Jones and W. Warner.

The Methodist Church of East Shelby

Fifteen people living in the vicinity of East Shelby organized a Methodist Episcopal Church in 1839. Membership increased very slowly, perhaps because it was located only a few miles south of Millville and west of West Barre where M. E. Churches organized a few years earlier were at this time flourishing. The congregation met in the local school house for fifteen years.

April 3, 1854, the members incorporated as the First Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in East Shelby. The petition to incorporate was signed by Seth Trowbridge and Cornelius V. Popon. Later that year they built their Church edifice on the west side of East Shelby Road about a mile and one half south of the hamlet. The cost of building was \$3,500. They had organized a Sunday School in 1840, for like most people of that period they wanted their children to receive religious instruction. They never had a resident pastor and were usually served by the pastor of the West Barre Church during most of the nineteenth century. In 1882 they repaired and remodeled their house of worship. At an unknown date the women organized a Ladies Aid Society which helped with local programs and to support Methodist Missions.

After three branches of the Methodist Church reunited in 1939 the word Episcopal was dropped from the name of the East Shelby Church as it was from all M. E. Churches. In 1913 this Church became a part of the Millville charge and remained there until 1958 when Conference again placed the congregation under the care of the West Barre pastor. It has been impossible to find much information about the East Shelby Church during the present century but it is known that the centennial of the building of the their edifice was celebrated in 1954. At that time membership was declining as older members died or became unable to continue active work in the Church. After 1962 services were not held regularly and Conference declared the East Shelby Methodist Church closed in 1964. The once attractive house of worship has been unused for several years in 1970.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
AT WEST SHELBY

The Methodist preachers riding Ridgeway Circuit had a preaching station at the little settlement of West Shelby about 1817 and soon a class was formed which worshiped at the schoolhouse therefor many years. In 1843 another class which had been meeting about a mile farther west on the County line joined with the West Shelby Class to organize as a Church. They erected a house of worship about a half mile south of West Shelby corners on the Salt Works Road.

There are no Church records available now and historical sources differ on dates regarding this Church. An historical piece in an old paper states that in 1875 the members voted to move the building to a site a little north of West Shelby Corners. When the article was written about 1941, Adelbert Benson, who was still living in the community, recalled that as a small boy he rode in the meeting house as it was moved to the new location by teams of horses. At this time an addition was built on for a kitchen and dining room. The ladies of the Church then became quite famous for the fine chicken suppers they served.

The West Shelby M. E. Church was also well known because the building was rather unique. It was built in an L shape with the spire topped bell tower in the angle. Inside the pews were arranged in circular fashion around the pulpit. For many years the bell called members and other to worship but during the 1930s the Church failed to win enough new members to replace those who died or moved away. About 1938 the Society disbanded and the remaining members united with other Methodist Churches. Three years later Genesee Conference sold the abandoned Church building. It was torn down soon afterward.

West Shelby Methodists never had a resident ^{pastor} and was a part of so many different pastoral charges at various times that it is now impossible to list the ministers who served the Church. The congregation had been placed by Conference in the Alabama, Millville, Royalton and Middleport charges at different periods. A few whose names have been found are the Revs. Daniel Jenkins, Menzo Jenkins and James A. Clark., and Victor Harding.

THE FREEWILL BAPTIST CHURCH
OF SHELBY CENTER

The Freewill Baptist Church in Shelby was organized in late 1844 or early January 1845. The Rev. Alanson Draper, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Shelby, withdrew from that Church in 1843 and several members withdrew with the pastor. A little more than a year later Mr. Draper organized these people and a few others into a new Church. On January 16, 1845, a Council of ministers appointed by Monroe Conference of Freewill Baptist Churches recognized the Society as a duly organized Freewill Baptist Church. The charter members were: Alanson Draper, G. W. Seeley, Joseph McCargar, John Bentley Jr., Caleb Stillwell, Adam Liddle, Sarah C. McCargar, Laura Draper, Anne McCargar, Marsylva Bentley, Ruth Perry, Harriet Perry and Melinda M. Liddle.

The first pastor was the Rev. Henry Blackman and they met for worship in the Shelby Center school house for a few years. In 1849 the members built a meeting house on the corner of Oak St. and South Gravel Road, at a cost of \$1400. A Sunday School was organized soon after the church was built. In 1879 the Sunday School reported a membership of 60 with Dr. E. M. Crab serving as Superintendent. The Freewill Baptist Church prospered for about fifty years but before the end of the century grew weaker as they failed to win new members to replace the older ones who died or moved away. Soon after 1900 regular services were discontinued. In 1912 the meeting house was purchased by a member of the Shelby Baptist Church for the use of the Ladies Aid Society. It was used for suppers and other programs for about twenty years. About 1935 the property was sold and the building soon afterward torn down and the land added to the lawn of the new owners.

Pastors of the Church were: the Revs Henry Blackman, A. Draper, Wm. Clark, P. S. Barker, Charles Cook, H. Perry, S. Bathrick, Wm. Young, A. Z. Mitchell, D. J. Whiting, M. Blackman, A. Z. Mitchell again in 1879, ... Moon, ... Butterfield, ... Cook, J. Kettle, Baker and Kerningham.

FLETCHER CHAPEL METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

After the Evangelical Lutherans ceased to hold services about 1850, people in the vicinity of their unused meeting house, began to gather there to worship God occasionally, when they could secure a preacher. As there were a number of Methodist Episcopal Churches at not too great a distance, it was usually one of their pastors who came to preach. John Eckerson, the trustee of the Lutheran Church who had purchased the property some years before, allowed them to use the building and probably joined his neighbors in worship there.

In 1855, John Eckerson was among the members who organized as the Fletcher Chapel and Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Society was taken under the care of Genesee Conference and the pastor of the Millville Church given charge of the new congregation also. A few years later Mr. Eckerson was elected as a trustee of the society. There is recorded in the County Clerk's office a deed dated, April 5, 1862, by which John Eckerson and wife Maria, deeded the former Lutheran Church property to the trustees of Fletcher Chapel and Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for \$40.00. The Trustees at that time were: Hiram Goff, Edward Edwards, Harvey Clute, John Eckerson, Sylvester Noble, Peter Bentley and Daniel Worthing.

The membership of Fletcher Chapel was never large, in 1894 it was reported as 34, but they carried on worship and religious instruction there for about 65 years. They kept their place of worship in repair and redecorated as needed and at an unknown building an addition for Sunday School space and social uses. They were a part of the Millville charge until 1897 after which they are not listed with any Orleans County Methodist Church. Probably Conference had placed them under the care of a near by Genesee County Church. An Orleans County Directory dated 1903 names the Rev. J. J. Johnston, address not given, as pastor at that time.

Fletcher Chapel M. E. Church went out of existence about 1920. With good roads and the general use of the automobile by that date, members could easily attend M. E. Churches in East Shelby, Millville or Medina. Conference sold the property to Grace Baptist Church in 1931 and it was later owned by another Church group. The old meeting house still known as Fletcher Chapel still stands in 1970 but is now vacant and in poor condition.

EAST SHELBY ADVENT CHURCH

The First Advent Society of East Shelby was organized about 1869 with a charter membership of 32. This was a larger number than the founders of most area nineteenth century Churches. The members had a substantial meeting house built in 1870 at a cost of \$3000, which was dedicated on October 22. At the time of organization the pastor was the Rev. Warren Vreeland and officers were: deacons - James B. Wyman, Lauren Grinnell and Samuel Reed; Secretary - Edward Sanderson Treasurer - Samuel Whitmore.

It is interesting that the Rev. Vreeland was a minister of the Christian and president of the Western New York Conference of Christian Churches. As the religious emphasis of the two denominations differed considerably it is rather difficult to understand how he could have served as pastor of Churches in both at about the same time. Other pastors who served the East Shelby Advent Church during its brief existence were the Revs. B. P. Stevens and J. H. Whitmore and Mr. Sweet. This Church died out about 1890. No one now living near East Shelby can remember services ever being held in the Advent Meeting house.

The building still stands and during the eighty or more years since religious services have been held there it has been used by a number of organizations.. It is said to have been first purchased by the local Maccabees Lodge, a popular nineteenth century organization, for their meeting place and was also used by the I.O. G.T. or Good Templars Lodge. The East Shelby Grange was the next owner and they repaired and improved the building, constructing a basement where they had dining room and kitchen. The main floor was used for their meeting place and for many programs. When the Grange died out in East Shelby the building was unused for some years but in 1958 was purchased by the East Shelby Fire Co. The firemen have repaired and remodeled the building to suit their needs as a recreation building. The century old Advent Church meeting house served as a place of worship for only about 20 years but has been used by many community organizations for eighty years and is still a sturdy building.

CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE CHURCH

The most recent Church organization in the Town of Shelby, began in Medina as a mission and was later organized as the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church of Medina.

This denomination was started by the Rev. A. B. Simpson, D.D., a Presbyterian clergyman in New York City who deplored the lack of devotion to Jesus Christ and evangelistic fervor which he noted in many fellow Presbyterians. He preached to his own congregation according to his personal convictions, with no intention of leaving the Presbyterian Church. Receiving much criticism from the Presbytery, however, he withdrew from the denomination to do independent evangelistic work. His preaching won so many converts that it became necessary to form them into a separate organization in 1881. This group adopted no specific doctrine or creed to which members must subscribe. They do have a simple statement which they use to express the core of their faith: "I believe in Jesus Christ, Saviour Sanctifier, Healer and Coming King." The term healer is meant in a spiritual rather than physical sense but they by no means reject the power of Jesus Christ to heal physically.

These Christians prefer to be known as an Evangelistic and Missionary Movement rather than as a Denomination but they do have a certain amount of organization. The latest available statistics were in a 1958 Religious Census which reported 1,142 Churches in the U. S. A. and Canada with a membership of 64,153, which is undoubtedly much larger now. These Churches were divided into 14 Districts, with an overall organization known as General Conference. The Churches are independent and are grouped together only to better handle missionary work, which is carried on in 22 foreign fields. These include South America, Africa, Near East, India, Indonesia, Japan, New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam and Chinese settlements in many places. In 1958 they supported 832 missionaries and had 1213 native Churches with a membership of 114,904 in those foreign fields. They own and operate Bible Colleges in Nyack, N. Y., St. Paul, Min., San Francisco, Cal. and Regina, Saskatchewan, Can. and are affiliated with Toccoa Falls Bible College in Ga.

A missionary from Buffalo started a C. & M. A. mission in a vacant store in Medina in 1940. The attendance and interest slowly increased for a number of years and in 1948 the congregation was organized as a Church by the Rev. T. F. Butler. Services were then moved to Fletcher Chapel in Shelby and a full program of Church activities built up. They repaired and improved the old chapel and carried on their work there for 20 years but it was inadequate for the growing congregation and many programs.

In 1966 a spacious lot on the west side of Shelby Basin Road, a short distance south of Medina Middleport Road, was donated to the Church by Walter Snell and Francis Lane. Work was begun on the new building in July 1967. It required considerable time to complete the project as most of the work of construction and finishing the interior was done by the pastor and members of the congregation. Free will offerings brought in the money to purchase building supplies as needed while also keeping up usual Church expenses and missionary support. There was no fund drive to pressure people into making pledges. The young people of the Church helped a great deal, coming after school and on Saturdays to work under the direction of the pastor. The Rev. Russell T. Peck who has served as pastor since 1964

led the Church through the successful building program.

The attractive new edifice with an attached apartment for the pastor's family, was completed so that the first service was held there on Easter Sunday, April 6, 1969. Considerable work remained to be done on the grounds and finishing basement rooms. This was done during the summer. The Christian and Missionary Alliance Church's House of God in Shelby was dedicated on Sunday, Oct. 12, 1969, by the Rev. Emerson Ackerman, District Superintendent of N. E. District of which the Church is a part.

The emphasis of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church of Medina, like others of this Movement, is evangelism in the local area and missionary work abroad. But the Church expects converts to live according to the teachings of Christ and has an active program aimed at helping people attain that goal. They have a strong youth program working with four age groups of the Alliance Youth Fellowship and the Sunday School. Other organizations of the Church are the Women's Missionary Program Fellowship and the Adult Fellowship. The membership of the Church is small, 26, in 1969, but a large congregation from a wide area, attracted by their program help support the work. Local and Missionary expenses are all paid by voluntary gifts. Sunday School enrollment is 100. Average attendance at Church services, 75.

Sunday services are; Sunday School 10:30 a.m., Morning Worship 11:15, Youth Fellowship 6:30 p. m., Evening Service 7:45.

Officers: Secretary - Mrs. Norman Wright, Finan'l. Sec. - Odmund Olsen, Church Treas. - Mrs. Daniel Zinkievich, Miss. Treas. - Mrs. Odmund Olsen, Trustees - Noel Grimes, Karl Weaver, Richard Oliver, Elders - Norman Wright, Noel Grimes, Richard Oliver, Deacons, who are in charge of visitation, - Byers Bachman and Richard Oliver, S. S. Supt. - Norman Wright.

Pastors: Rev. Robert Carter, Missionary, 1940 - 1948, Rev. T. F. Butler, 1948 - 1954, Rev. Wm. Bowler, 1954 - 1958, Rev. James Hedgie, 1958 - 1964, Rev. Russell T. Peck, 1964 -