

1872

1922

The
Semi-Centennial
of the
First Methodist Episcopal
Church

Oriskany Falls, N. Y.

June 11-12-13, 1922

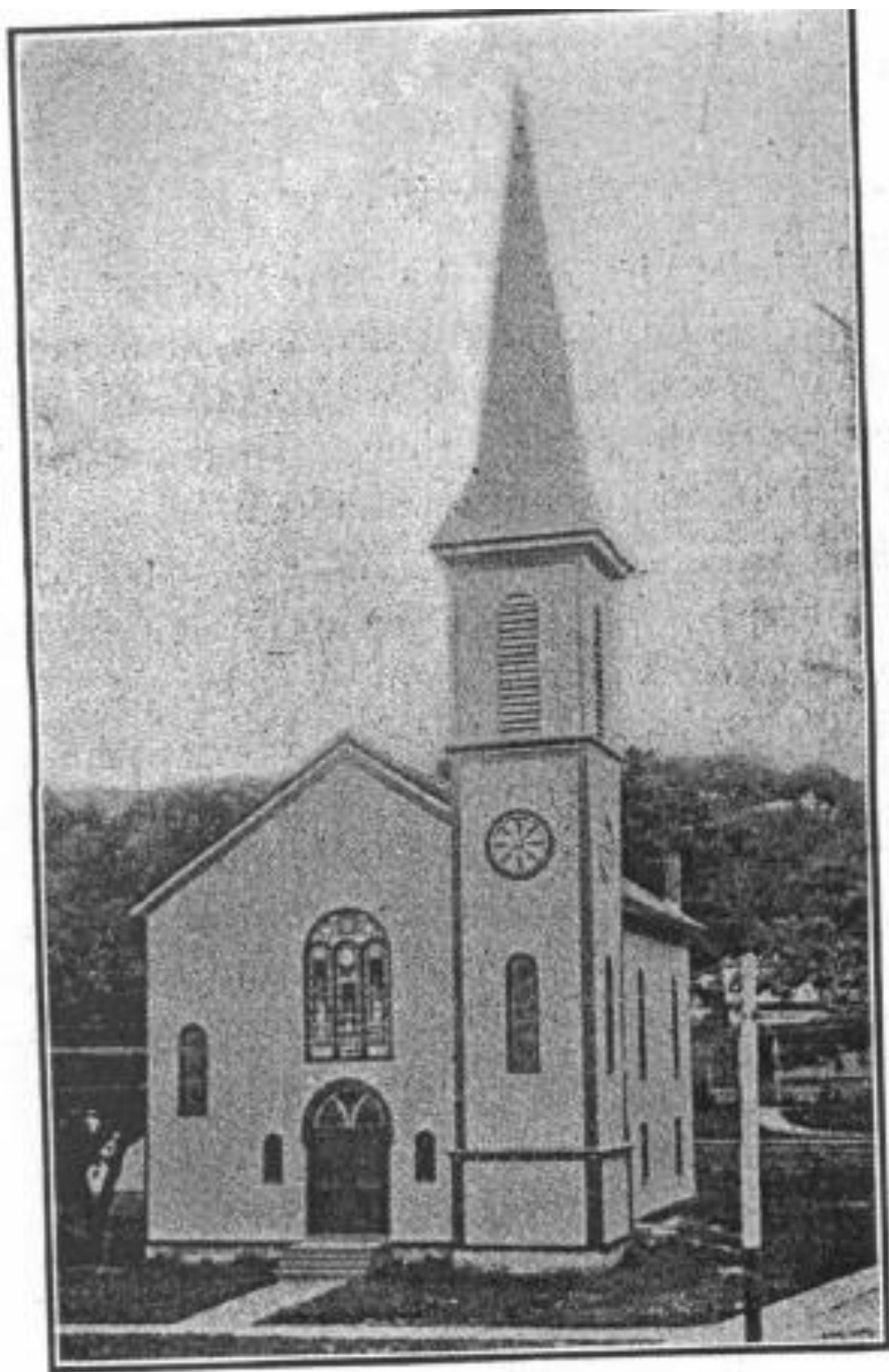
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FOREWORD

This brief history of the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Oriskany Falls, covers a period of sixty-four years, beginning with the coming of the first pastor to the present time. There are doubtless many imperfections contained herein.

The following items have been gleaned from many sources in an attempt to set forth as accurately as possible the salient facts of the Church.

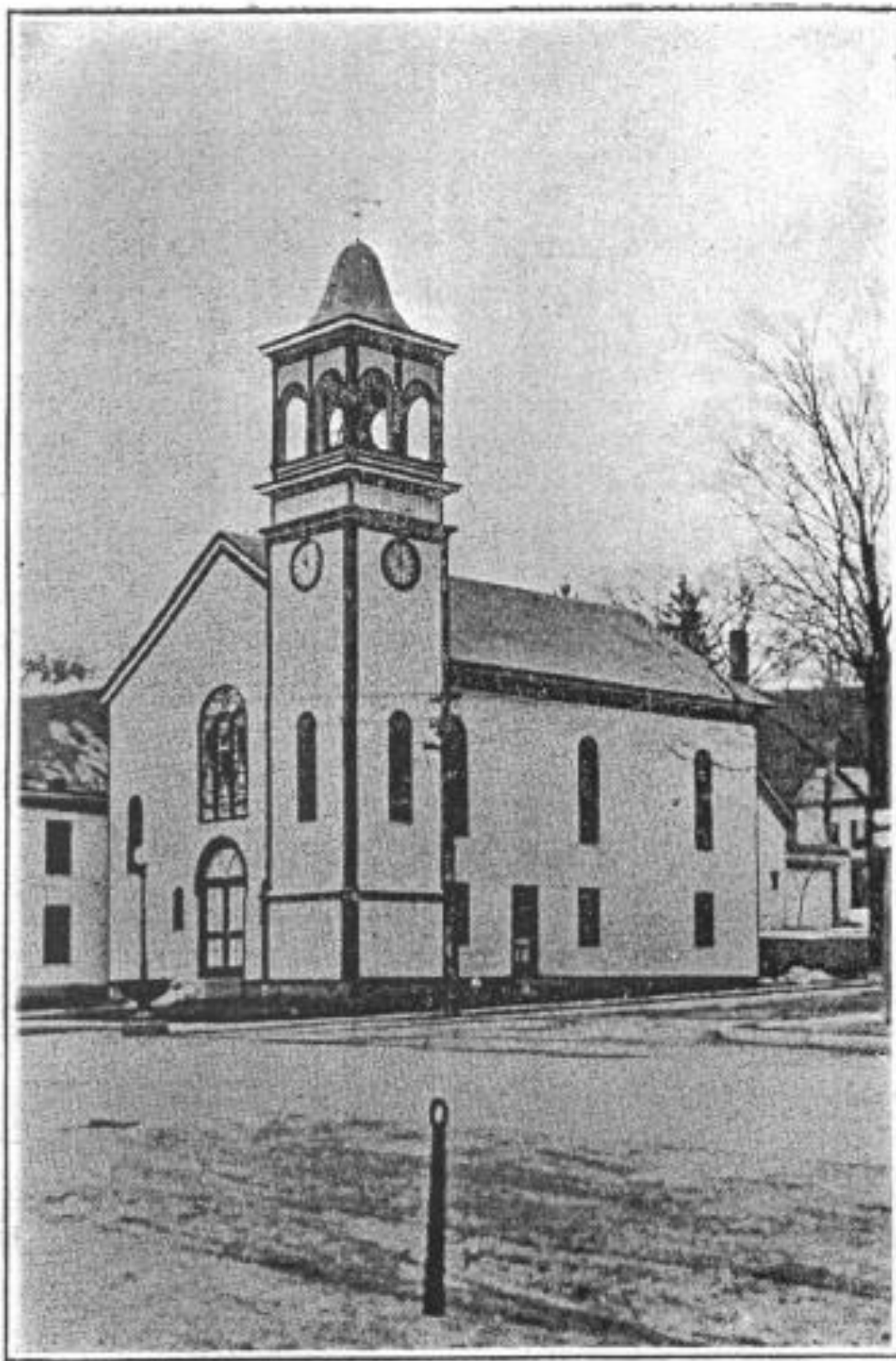
It has been a great pleasure to review the records and to trace the foot prints of the noble men and women who set out to meet the demands of their day and built a Church that commemorates their faith in God, perpetuates their memories and lifts high an ideal and standard for all the coming years; and to preserve such records this little book goes forth.



THE CHURCH AS IT WAS WHEN BUILT

THE PROPERTY

Sixty-four years ago the first Methodist minister was appointed to Oriskany Falls. There had been no pastor in the Congregational Church for some time and a few of the members of the Church and congregation made a successful effort to secure a Methodist Minister. The services were held in the stone, Congregational, church for about three years; and about this time there was a little thought given toward building a Methodist church, but the small society was too poor to enter upon such an undertaking without some outside assistance, so an effort was made to secure help in building a church. The Oneida Conference in session in Cooperstown, N. Y. April 1861 ordered "That the pastor at Oriskany Falls be authorized to solicit funds outside of Oneida District for aid in building a church." This was signed by a committee consisting of J. W. Newcomb, who had been pastor at Oriskany Falls for the past year, and D. W. Bristol, Presiding Elder of Oneida District. What results ever came from that resolution has not appeared, but circumstances indicate that nothing ever was done; the society worshipped in the school house for the next six years. In June 1867, Bishop Kingsley formally separated Augusta Center from Oriskany Falls, and on the 30th of July



THE CHURCH AS IT LOOKS NOW (1922)

the society came together and duly elected Eli Hicks, Roswell Conger, E. J. Dudley, H. S. Bingham, and John Hewitt trustees and incorporated as "The First Methodist Episcopal Church of Oriskany Falls, Oneida County, New York." This document was properly signed by Eli Hicks and Edward Britt, Aug, 21, 1867, and the seal of the county attached. Soon after a corner lot situated in the center of the village was bought for \$1700. and the small building on it was fitted up for holding service. This continued for five years. In 1870 the building was moved across the street and the present building was erected during the pastorate of J. C. Darling, and dedicated on 2nd of July, 1872, at a cost of about \$5000. Three years later there was reported a debt of \$1000. on the church property.

In 1876 a bell was hung in the tower at a cost of \$400. During the following years the society struggled to reduce the debt and care for all the local expenses with small success. When A. A. Pierce was pastor in 1884, he undertook to remove the debt and succeeded in raising \$725, which paid off the debt, and painted and shingled the church. At the close of the year Mr. Pierce wrote in the Church Record, "The Society has a Church worth \$5000. and all free from debt, the first time in thirteen years." Five years afterwards a house was bought on North Main St. for a parsonage at a cost of \$1500. and paid \$500. that year and carried a debt of \$1000. In

fifteen years this debt was entirely paid, besides spending several hundred dollars on improvements and repairs on the property. Electric lights were put into the church in 1905. To L. A. Griggs, the pastor first to stay five years, belong a few mentionable honors, first, soon after coming to this charge he was married, and then he set to work to put a pipe organ in the church at a cost of \$1200. The hardwood floor was laid in 1912, and through the efforts of the Neighborhood Club and kindly disposed and benevolently inclined citizens the town clock was placed in the tower. The Methodist Church was chosen because of its central location. About \$1000. was spent for repairs and improvements during 1914, and a debt of \$350. remained which was entirely paid the next three years, together with considerable sums applied on repairs.

For several years the parsonage was considered too small and not well located for the minister's family, especially where there were small children, and plans were made to sell the house and either buy or build a suitable house better located. After several fruitless attempts to carry out such plans and apparently no nearer the objective, just after the close of Rev. C. H. Carter's pastorate, rather unexpectedly the trustees found a splendid house on the heights of Main St. that as suddenly came upon the market, and was offered at a price fully as surprising, considering the location, the size and arrangement

of the house. This was bought from C. F. Carter for \$4800., and the Methodists came into possession of a house nearly new with all the modern improvements, beautiful for situation on the side of a large hill that shelters it from the west and north winds, and overlooking the beautiful valley and the rising hills to the south and east. This is one of the finest parsonages in the Conference. The next week after this house was bought, an opportunity came to sell the old parsonage which had been the property of the Church for 31 years, for \$1700, an increase of \$200 over the purchase price. A few alterations and some improvements were made on the new parsonage amounting to about \$550. and \$300. paid on the new house, leaving a debt of \$2800, and this was reduced to \$2700. the next year. At this semi-centennial the estimated value of the church is \$9000. and the parsonage is \$5000. The remaining debt will be easily removed as soon as the industrial depression is passed.

This Church never had any great sweeping revival of religious excitement which greatly increased its membership, or any large gifts from the wealthy, but there has been a steady growth from the beginning, and the property has been secured by patient and unwearied toil of the faithful members and the earnest pastors. To no one can be attributed outstanding success in building or improving the property, but the faithful work of all made this achieve-

ment possible. For a few years efforts were put forth to pay all debts, and in this way preparation for additions came about. "One sowed and another reaped", and all were working for the common end. Fifty years have come and gone, the building is a monument to the faith and courage of those who planned and built the church, when money was scarce, and none wealthy, but faithful, diligent toil and sacrifice accomplished the work. We celebrate the event. It is indeed a "Year of Jubilee", to many because of the united message that came from the pulpit during all of these years, and the influence of the lives of the membership of the Church in the community. Pioneer days are always rugged and often full of weariness, but characterized by hopefulness; a substantial foundation has been laid, a splendid work has begun, and from this Jubilee we look forward and behold greater opportunities are already within sight, and we anticipate the Church of the next fifty years will far excel the Church of the past fifty years. The program is the same, the application will vary, but it will always be the Golden Rule applied in all the affairs of men, and every walk of life. This is our task.

THE MEMBERSHIP

April, 1858, Bishop Ames appointed the Rev. A. L. York pastor at Oriskany Falls. When he arrived he found a small class consisting of George and Mary Helyer, Elizabeth Mephen, Emogene Griggs and

Mary Conger, all of whom united with the Methodist Church in Oriskany Falls, by certificate on the 1st and 15th of May 1858. The names of Eli and Elizabeth Hicks, Rhoda Southworth, Maria Wheat, and C. A. Watrous appear without any notation stating how or when they became members, but assuming they were all here to welcome pastor York, then there were 11 members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Oriskany Falls. That year 6 joined on probation. Among this class of probationers is the name of Cornelia Vaughn. She is the only known surviving member of that first probationer's class. Her address is Binghamton, N. Y. She was baptized and received into full membership Jan. 1860, by the Rev. D. W. Bristol, Presiding Elder of the Oneida District. Another name in that probationer's class is Catherine Tucker. She was a member of this Church till her death several years ago. Two of her children, the Misses Helen and Mary Tucker are now members of this Church.

- Emogene Griggs joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in some other locality Aug. 5, 1844, when she was 15 years old. She was received into the membership of this Church May 15, 1858, and remained a member till her death April 23, 1920. One of her daughters, Miss Anna Griggs, still holds her membership with us.

In 1860 Harriet Britt and Hannah Bingham joined the Church, and the name of Edward Britt

appears among the members who joined the next year. This interesting notation is taken from the register, under the date of March 4, 1861. "Children Baptized, Flora A. Britt, James H. Britt, Wm. Franklin Britt, and Edward A. Britt", and the officiating minister was Dwight Williams then pastor at Madison, N. Y. Miss Eliza Carter and her father, Calvin Carter, were both baptized and received into the Church April 2, 1871. Frances Gates united on probation May 28, 1871, and was received into full connection March 23, 1873. She is the only one who was a member fifty years ago and is still a member of this Church. Another name appearing among the probationers of 1871 is Anna Griggs, but she did not join into full connection till 1884. In 1870 W. H. and Mary I. Fowler moved into Oriskany Falls and at once became active and leaders in the Church until their death a few years ago, their daughter, Mrs. C. C. Newell is a member of the Church. Helen Tucker and C. F. Carter were received on probation in 1872 and became full members the next year.

The Church was 48 years in reaching a membership of over 100. In 1917 the membership was 158, the largest it has ever been. The present membership is 130.

Another item of more than passing interest is that two families of our Church have for the past 50 years been readers of the Christian Advocate. The original subscribers were Calvin Carter and W. H.

Fowler, and C. F. Carter and Mrs. C. C. Newell became acquainted with this great Church weekly in their parents' homes, and they both are subscribers now.

ORGANIZATIONS

The Ladies Aid Society was organized in 1860. Mrs. Vaughn is the only surviving charter member. In the sixty-two years this society has been active in the financial and social departments of the Church. It was through the Ladies' Aid Society that the lot was bought on which the church was built, and it is a demonstration of their clear foresight and active interest they had in planning for the future, and so well did they direct their efforts that after 55 years no improvement on the choice of a location for the Methodist Church could be made. This itself is a monument of the important part the women took in Church affairs.

The Sunday School has been an active and essential department of the Church from the beginning. It has called the attention of the youth and all the members of the Church and congregation to the study of the Bible as the guide of the Christian life. As near as we can discern at this date, there have been only eight superintendents of the Sunday School, as follows: George Byrns, for about twelve years. W. H. Fowler, for something like eighteen years. C. F. Carter, thirteen years, Wm. Ellis six

months, F. W. Clark one and one half years. D. S. Davies, fifteen years, B. M. Van Evera one year, and E. D. Hatheway, two years.

No less efficiently organized and sustained was the Primary department of the Sunday School. There were five superintendents, in the following order, but the number of years is not known in two instances, Miss Helen Tucker, Mrs. Sarah Root, formerly Mrs. Slocum, Mrs. C. C. Newell, five years; Mrs. W. C. Maynard, eleven years; Mrs. Wm. Rawnsley, eight years; Mrs. E. D. Hatheway, two years, and all are living, and with the exception of Mrs. Root, who lives in Rome, N. Y., are members of our Church.

In 1892 a chapter of the Epworth League was organized and for several years carried on an encouraging work among the younger members of the Church and congregation. The past few years it has ceased to function.

A junior Epworth League came into existence in 1894 and has operated with more or less regularity through these years. At the present it is not active.

The Webster Brotherhood was organized in March 1910, and brought the men of the Church into closer fellowship, and has carried out some important programs. E. D. Hatheway was the first president, and so ably did he fill this position that he is still holding that office.

The Women's Foreign Missionary Society appears first in the statistical tables of 1894 when \$50. was credited to this organization. Nothing more was reported till six years later, and since 1900 the women of the Church have sustained an active Auxiliary. Mrs. D. S. Davies is the efficient president. Her abilities are recognized outside the community and for the past three years she has ably filled the position of President of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Mohawk District.

The past year the young women of the Church have organized a branch of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society. Miss Marjorie Stowell is the energetic president, and they are taking up the work with enthusiasm.

The Women's Home Missionary Society appears to have come into being in 1900 and since has maintained an active branch of Church work in supporting the great work the women are doing among the foreigners who come to our shores, city missions, and such activities as call for a missionary spirit in the Country and the insular possessions. Mrs. J. A. Bardrof is the capable president.



WILLIAM D. AUBREY, PASTOR OF THE CHURCH

THE PASTORS

1858	Albert L. York	Withdrew from Conference in 1882.
1859	Mr. Gillette	A supply, no record.
1860	John W. Newcomb	Transferred out in 1866.
1861-2	George W. Foster	Central N. Y. Conference, died May 9, 1891.
1863	Timothy D. Owen	Supply, admitted into Conference in 1864.
1864	Francis D. Higgins	Died in Bouckville, Aug. 22, 1873.
1865	Albert G. Fargo	Located minister living at Pine Woods.
1866-7	Loren Eastwood	Central N. Y. Conference, died Aug. 1, 1907.
1868-9	Albert R. Warner	Died in Clinton, June 12, 1896.
1870-2	Josiah C. Darling	Died in Syracuse, N. Y., Oct. 17, 1907.
1873	Erastus J. Clemons	Located in 1878, lived in Clayville, N. Y.
1874	Lewis G. Weaver	Withdrew in 1862, supplied Oriskany Falls in 1873.
1875	Joseph Baird	Transferred to N. Y. East Conference 1884.
1876	Richard E. Call	Discontinued the ministry at end of the year.
1877	William R. Davis	Local preacher, supplied 10 months, later lived in Utica.
	George Ernst	Supplied 2 months, joined Conference retired and lives in Rome, N. Y.
1878-9	Moses Wells	Died April 16, 1894.
1880	Francis A. Woodard	Transferred to Central Ill. Conference 1885.
1881	James Stowell	Located in 1883. Died in Rome, that same year.
1882	Samuel M. Fisk	Died in Solsville, N. Y., Oct. 23, 1912.
1883-5	Arthur A. Pierce	Died in Knoxboro, Aug. 14, 1890.

1886-8	Albert R. Warner	Record above.
1889	Brayton M. Phelps	Died in Chaumont, N. Y., February 15, 1908.
1890-3	Adma G. Markham	Died in Depauville, N. Y., Feb. 8, 1900.
1894-5	George Merritt	Pastor at Macomb, N. Y.
1896-8	Benjamin G. Miller	Pastor, Dryer Memorial Church, Utica, N. Y.
1899-1902	Stewart L. Littlefield	Living at Gasport, N. Y.
1903-4.	Anson D. Webster	Died in Oriskany Falls, Oct. 6, 1917.
1905-6.	Frederick A. Miller	Pastor, First Church, Rome, N. Y.
1907-11	Leroy A. Griggs	Pastor, in Carthage, N. Y.
1912-14	Harry B. Fritts	Retired, lives in Syracuse, N. Y.
1915-19	Charles H. Carter	Pastor, in Norwood, N. Y.
1920-22	William D. Aubrey	Pastor, in Oriskany Falls, N. Y.

During these sixty-four years, thirty-two pastors served this Church. The shortest pastorate belongs to Rev. George Ernst who was here two months of year Rev. W. R. Davis was appointed to Oriskany Falls and left before the year was up. The longest term of any pastor was five years, L. A. Griggs and C. H. Carter have this distinction. A. R. Warner held two pastorates here, the first for two years, and the second one for three years. A. G. Markham and S. L. Littlefield were pastors four years each. The three year pastorates belong to J. C. Darling, A. A. Pierce, B. G. Miller and H. B. Fritts. Seven men remained on the charge two years each, and the other 15 were one year each. The present pastor is on his third year.

Nearly all of these men were members of the

Conference, and remained in the ministry till the end or till the infirmities of age compelled them to retire, then to be a benediction to the communities where they lived. What noble records they left! Their devotion to God, and His work, their loyalty to the truth, the kindliness of heart, their unfailing zeal, and loyal patriotism enabled them to take the lead in every good work wherever they lived. In the obituary of one of the men is this sentence, "He was an ornament to our Conference," and this could as truthfully be said of them all. Nine of these pastors are still living. Two are retired; seven are effective and are filling important charges in the Conference, rendering high and useful service in their respective fields. They are preparing the way for the years to come.

MISCELLANEOUS

The first seventeen years this Church gave for all benevolences a total of \$533. The following twenty-two years it was \$1036. The next twenty years, it amounted to \$6827, and the last five years to \$11,439, making a total of \$19,835.

The total amount paid for building and improvements during the fifty years was \$18,360. The total amount paid for pastors' salaries, exclusive of house rent during the sixty-four years was \$35,054; these three items make a grand total of \$75,049. These figures are not absolutely correct, for the method of recording statistics varied during these years, and was not always uniform, but it gives a general idea of the entire cost of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Oriskany Falls. The aggregate looks large, but the average is less than \$1200. a year, and this puts the Church on the basis of the least expenditure of money, and at the same time the most important institution in the place.

The first twelve years the pastors received \$300. a year, if that could be raised. The next eleven years, the salary was set at \$400., and in each of these instances a donation was included. The next eighteen years, the salary remained around \$500. and a parsonage, and in some instances a donation. The

last twenty-three years the salary had gradually increased till it reached \$1500 and a parsonage.

The average annual cost for current expenses and benevolences was around \$15. per member for a good many years. The last year it was \$15. per member for current expenses, and above \$16. per member for benevolences.

This Church has the unique distinction of having been within the confines of three annual Conferences. When the first pastor was appointed it was in the Oneida Conference. The General Conference of 1868 changed the boundaries and the Oneida Conference went out of existence, and the next four years Oriskany Falls was in the Central New York Conference. In 1872 the General Conference re-adjusted the boundaries and Oriskany Falls was placed within the Northern New York Conference, where it has remained for fifty years.

Bishop Stuntz preached in our church one Sunday morning in June 1915. He is the only Methodist Episcopal Bishop who ever visited this Church.

Edith M. Britt, now Mrs. Victor Fellows, a Methodist minister in Iowa, is the only member of our Church who became a missionary. She left home for India in Aug. 1915. For health reasons she was obliged to return home.

For years a donation was given the pastor in addition to the salary estimated. The first of such

donations was held at the home of Chauncey Carter, grandfather of C. F. Carter, in the house now owned and occupied by Mr. Williams on Broad St.

When the Society was worshipping in the school house they had no instrument to assist in leading the singing. Mr. Whittaker offered to help out so brought his bass viol and played for the singing. In the meantime his dog was quietly lying on the floor at his feet.

Mr. Gillette, a supply pastor in 1859 was fond of smoking. Two men made cigars in a building not far from the center of the village. Mr. Gillette got acquainted with them. When Christmas came and they were taking the presents from the tree a long package was there for Mr. Gillette; upon opening it, he discovered a cigar about a foot long, with the compliments of his friends, the cigar makers.

At the session of the Oneida Conference in Ithaca, April 18-24, 1860, this note appears in the journal, "A. G. Fargo was, at the request of Conference, reprimanded by Bishop Baker, for solemnizing Matrimony while yet unordained." This was five years before he was pastor at Oriskany Falls.

"Aug. 30, 1914, lightning struck the steeple of the Church and badly damaged it without setting fire to the building."

OFFICIARY

THE OFFICIARY OF THE CHURCH AT THIS SEMI-CENTENNIAL.

Resident Bishop, William Burt, D. D., Buffalo, N. Y.
 District Superintendent, Eugene H. Joy, D. D.,
 New Hartford, N. Y.
 Pastor, William D. Aubrey.
 Local Preacher, Russell P. Davies.

THE OFFICIAL BOARD

J. A. Bardrof	George Havens
H. J. Bingham	C. H. Kimberley
W. F. Britt	C. C. Newell
C. F. Carter	Mrs. C. C. Newell
F. W. Clark	Mrs. Wm. Rawsley
D. S. Davies	H. C. Stowell
C. C. Gaylord	Miss Mary Tucker
E. D. Hatheway	B. M. Van Evera
Mrs. E. D. Hatheway	Miss Cora W. Wood

OFFICERS

Treasurer	-	-	F. W. Clark
Centenary Treasurer	-	-	H. C. Stowell
Recording Steward	-	-	C. F. Carter
Communion Steward	-	-	Miss Mary Tucker
Social Life Director	-	-	B. M. Van Evera
Religious Education Director	-	-	E. D. Hatheway

TRUSTEES

Chairman	-	O. C. Gaylord
Secretary and Treasurer	-	C. C. Newell

THE CHOIR

Director	-	E. D. Hatheway
Organist	-	B. M. Van Evera

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Superintendent	-	D. S. Davies
Primary Superintendent	-	Mrs. E. D. Hatheway
Home Department Supt.	-	Mrs. A. M. Dudley
Cradle Roll Supt.	-	Mrs. Otis Godfrey

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

PRESIDENT

Ladies' Aid Society	-	Mrs. Henrietta Van Swall
Women's Foreign Missions	-	Mrs. D. S. Davies
Women's Home Missions	-	Mrs. J. A. Bardrof
Young Women's Missions	-	Miss Marjorie Stowell
Webster Brotherhood	-	E. D. Hatheway