

1770-1878

HISTORY
—OF—
BRADFORD COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA.

WITH

Illustrations and Biographical Sketches

OF

SOME OF ITS PROMINENT MEN AND PIONEERS.

BY

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with Added Index.

THE SECOND CHURCH IN WYSOX

grew out of a secession from the old church, partly on personal and partly on political grounds. The excising act of 1837 afforded a pretext for uniting with the presbytery of Montrose, which ranged with the New School party. In 1857-58 they built a snug little church. The church was served by supplies until about 1860, when Rev. H. J. Crane became the pastor, and continued to be until presbytery united the two branches.

There are in the county now sixteen church organizations, with the same number of church edifices, and a membership of 1350 souls. There are 14 ordained ministers, of whom 6 are pastors, 5 are stated supplies, 2 are without charge, and 1 is honorably retired.

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER.

This church was organized May 18, 1855, by Rev. A. M. Macauley, a commissioner from the Reformed presbytery of Philadelphia. He was assisted in the organization by the Rev. Samuel Wylie, of the Western Reformed presbytery. At the organization there were 26 members, but a short time after 25 more were added to the number. The Rev. Robert Stevenson was ordained and installed pastor of the church July 11, 1861; the ordination sermon was preached by the Rev. T. W. J. Wylie, D.D., and the Rev. W. Sterret gave the charge to the pastor and people. Soon after their organization they erected a house of worship, and also a comfortable parsonage. Mr. Stevenson left in 1867. Before his pastorate the church was supplied by different individuals, sometimes stately, sometimes irregularly. Since 1869 they have had preaching regularly every alternate Sabbath.

The organization of the Reformed Presbyterian church of Ulster was brought about in the following manner. As the Hon. James Pollock, a short time before his election as governor of Pennsylvania, was traveling through Bradford County, he was accosted by two farmers, whose faces bore evidence that they were earnest and honest men, while their record showed that they had been born in the land of the Covenanters. One of them—James Howie—was a connection of John Howie, so well known as the author of "Scott's Worthies," and the other—Walter Pollock—of the kindred of the author of the "Course of Time." Having been informed that Mr. Pollock was a Reformed Presbyterian, they made known to him their desire to obtain preaching from the ministers of that denomination, as they had been connected with it in Scotland. Mr. Pollock presented their case to some ministers in Philadelphia, and in due time a church was organized, as already stated.

BALLIBAY CONGREGATION (COVENANTERS*).

A number of Irish Presbyterians, mostly from the county of Monaghan, emigrated to Pennsylvania more than half a century ago, and settled within a few miles of Wyalusing. In 1832, Rev. David Scott organized them into a congregation, with George Gamble and William Morrow as elders. In 1833, Mr. Gamble and a part of the members went with the "New Lights," and the congregation was disorganized.

Mr. Morrow and the remainder continued faithful to their principles, and sought supplies. For about four years they received occasional preaching from Rev. Mr. Douglass, W. B. Williams, and others, but for the most part from Mr. Francis Gayley, a licentiate. They appreciated him highly as an able and faithful preacher, and when, in 1838, he withdrew from the church, they all followed him. Under his ministry they continued faithfully to adhere to Reformation principles, read the old authors, studied the Bible diligently, and were intelligent and earnest Christians. At length, in 1859, Mr. Gayley proposed to assume ministerial functions and re-baptize all his followers. To this they would not consent, and nearly all left him. They however adhered faithfully to the Covenanter faith. As early as 1873 or 1874 they were visited by some of the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian church, and Aug. 28, 1875, they were reorganized into a congregation at Ballibay. Seven of the old organization of 1832 were incorporated into the new one, and twelve united with them on profession of their faith,—nineteen in all. Dr. F. G. Morrow and Richard Graham were elected elders, and John Brannan and Newton J. Morrow deacons. Services are held in the school-house in Ballibay, in the township of Herriek. They are connected with the New York presbytery, which sends supplies to them at stated periods to preach and administer the sacraments.

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN BRADFORD COUNTY.*

The history of the Protestant Episcopal church in Bradford County is not a record of rapid and continuous progress, but rather of constant struggle and missionary effort.

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH, PIKE.

The first church organized and admitted into union with the convention was St. Matthew's church, in Pike township. This was in 1814, and among the persons applying for a charter were Dimon Bostwick, Benajah Bostwick, Jabez Bosworth, Salmon Bosworth, Daniel Ross, and David Olmstead. Rev. Manning B. Roche was the first rector. For several years the congregation assembled for worship in the upper part of a store owned by Salmon Bosworth. The church building was erected in the year 1820, and consecrated soon afterwards by Bishop White, who was accompanied from Philadelphia by Rev. Jackson Kemper, afterwards missionary bishop of the northwest and of the diocese of Wisconsin. In the year 1825, Rev. Samuel Marks, a missionary of "the Society for the advancement of Christianity in Pennsylvania," for the counties of Bradford and Susquehanna, became rector of this church, and the same year organized a Sunday-school. The number of communicants connected with this church at that time was twenty. Rev. Samuel Marks continued rector, except during 1831 and 1832, until 1834; he is now over eighty years of age, and rector of Christ church, Huron, Ohio.

His successors in St. Matthew's church have been Rev. Samuel Tiffany Lord, Rev. Freeman Lane, Rev. Barclay A. Smith, all now deceased, Rev. De Witt C. Bylesby, now

* Collated from "Our Banner," vol. ii. p. 378.

* By George D. Stroud, A.M.

living in Roselle, N. J., Rev. Hale Townsend, now of Charles City, Iowa, Rev. William Smith Heaton, now city missionary in Philadelphia, and Rev. George Paine Hopkins, a hale and hearty old gentleman, who is filling the rectorship for the third time.

CHRIST CHURCH, ATHENS.

Rev. Samuel Tiffany Lord, a missionary of the "Society for the advancement of Christianity," organized a church at Athens, under the name of Christ church, on Aug. 30, 1833. Athens was at this time in a declining condition, and this organization did not become permanent, so that in about three years services were given up and the church disbanded.

CHRIST CHURCH, TOWANDA.

Rev. Samuel Tiffany Lord, in addition to his labors at Athens, held occasional services during the autumn of 1833 in Towanda, and in December began to officiate there regularly every Sunday. Among the laymen who were active in introducing the services of the church in Towanda were Henry S. Mercur, M. C. Mercur, O. D. Bartlett, and Mark Miller. The church services were held for a number of years in the old court-house, and the Sunday-school in the old "fireproof" belonging to the county was taught by M. C. Mercur, O. D. Bartlett, and Miss Mary Woodruff. Antes Snyder, Wm. B. Foster, Jr., and Abraham Goodwin were prominent members of the church in its early days.

In 1840, Rev. Robert G. Hays, in charge of the parish, reported to the convention that the amount necessary to complete a frame church thirty-six feet front by fifty feet deep, had been raised. The money appears to have been subscribed but not all paid.

Dec. 20, 1841, the court granted a charter, under the name of Christ's church, to Wm. B. Foster, Jr., O. D. Bartlett, Abraham Goodwin, John N. Weston, M.D., C. L. Ward, M. C. Mercur, David Wilnot, and their successors. The year 1842 was one of almost unparalleled financial difficulties and distress in the community, but notwithstanding the church was completed in this year and an organ purchased.

In this year Rev. George Watson became rector, and in 1844 the church was admitted into union with the convention. Rev. Asa S. Colton became rector of this church Jan. 1, 1845. In 1847, Rev. Robert J. Parvin was elected rector, and entered on his duties September 12, and the church became self-supporting. In 1849 the church was altered and enlarged, and a bell procured. Rev. Benjamin J. Douglass succeeded to the rectorship June 20, 1850, and continued in charge of the church till April 11, 1866. During the first year of his pastorate the church debt was entirely paid off. During his second year the exterior of the church was painted and a tower erected. During 1853 and 1854, more than \$2000 was raised by the congregation, and a rectory built. The months of January, February, and March, 1866, witnessed a deep religious interest in the community, and on April 11, the occasion of Mr. Douglass' last ministrations in this church, he presented fifty-five candidates to Bishop Vail, acting for Bishop Stevens, the bishop of the diocese, for confirmation.

Rev. Francis D. Hoskins entered on the rectorship on

the first Sunday, August, 1866, and remained in charge about three years.

On the first Sunday in January, 1870, Rev. William McGlathery became rector, and held the position till the autumn of 1873. On Oct. 21, 1873, the vestry extended a unanimous call to Rev. Charles Ewbank McIlvaine, son of the late Bishop Charles P. McIlvaine, of Ohio, to become rector of the parish, and on Sunday, Nov. 30, he entered on his duties. In December, 1875, while officiating at a funeral of a child, he caught a violent cold which settled on his lungs, and on Feb. 22, 1876, he died at the rectory, to the great grief of his family and the congregation. Funeral services were held in Christ church by Rev. F. D. Hoskins, of Elmira, and Rev. A. Augustus Marple, of Scranton. His remains were taken to Wilmington, Del., in charge of a committee of the vestry and congregation, and after funeral services in St. Andrew's church, of which his father-in-law Bishop Alfred Lee is rector, were committed to the earth in Old Swedes' cemetery.

After the death of Mr. McIlvaine the church was served by Rev. Wm. Atwill, of Elmira, and Rev. J. McA. Harding, of Athens, and by lay reading, until the present rector, Rev. John S. Beers, entered on his rectorship, Sunday, Sept. 17, 1876. During the last three months of 1877 the church has been enlarged by the addition of a recess chancel, a library-room, a vestry-room, and a number of new pews. The organ has been moved to the chancel end of the church. The galleries have been removed, and the whole interior has been handsomely papered and painted, and made an attractive place of worship. Since the organization of the parish 435 persons have been baptized and 278 confirmed, and the church is steadily progressing in influence and membership.

For many years the Sunday-school of Christ church has been very flourishing. Mr. B. S. Russell, now of Philadelphia, was the superintendent for about fifteen years. Mr. S. W. Alvord was his successor. The present superintendent is Mr. E. T. Fox, who performs the duties of his position with ability and zeal. Nearly all the rectors of this church have held frequent mission services outside of their parish bounds, sometimes even going into adjoining counties.

TRINITY CHURCH, ATHENS.

Rev. Freeman Lane, rector of St. Andrew's church, Springville, Susquehanna county, reports that he held occasional services in 1837, but that the church was feeble, and unable to secure clerical services.

In 1839, Rev. Robert G. Hays, officiating at Christ church, Towanda, preached occasionally at Athens, and reported that the people were making an effort to erect a chapel. This effort amounted to little at that time. In 1842 the Episcopalians met and reorganized a parish under the name of Trinity church, and elected Rev. George P. Hopkins rector. The services were at first held in a school-house, but before May, 1843, a church building was erected.

In August, 1843, Rev. George Watson, rector of Christ church, Towanda, became rector of this parish also. In August, 1845, Rev. A. Augustus Marple, then in deacon's orders, went to Athens by direction of the bishop, and held services twice a week for nine weeks, when he accepted a