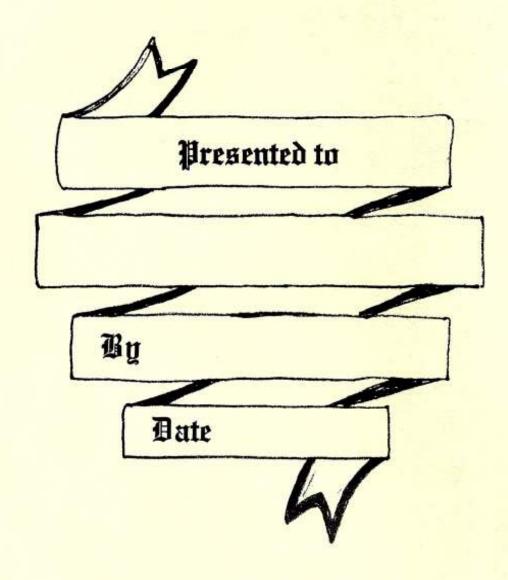
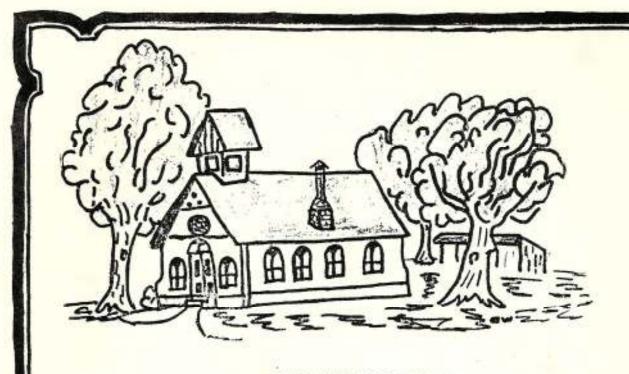
Ames Chapel Methodist 1879-1979

Claude D. Wilson



Alith Best Wishes and Sincere appreciation, Claude Devill Allson



AMES CHAPEL METHODIST

1879-1979

A Centennial Edition

by

Claude Derrill Wilson



"AMES CHAPEL METHODIST 1879-1979"

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> Printed by MACCALLUM HOUSE Bloomington, Indiana

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"Let's take a stroll down memory lane "

INTRODUCTION

The Historical Committee of Ames Chapel United Methodist Church, Mrs. Ora Underwood, Mrs. Evelyn Abel and Mrs. Pearl Wilson, asked me to write a history of the church to be given at the centennial celebration on September 16, 1979. This I considered a unique honor because my ancestors were very much involved in the formation of this Church. My grandmother, Martha Isabelle Stackhouse Wilson, was the first convert, so I am told, in this newly organized church. Although I never had the privilege of knowing her, I feel her influence on my father, and also my mother, had great bearing upon my life, thus their Godly influence gave me a guiding spiritual foundation to establish my life upon. If I were to subtitle this book it would be, "AMES CHAPEL . . . A POWER OF INFLUENCE". I am sure that many others, both my relatives and friends, whose lives have been touched by this particular church, share the same sentiments.

Hopefully, as new material is secured and information not yet come to our knowledge, this booklet will be revised from time to time. If you find errors in this edition, I would be pleased to stand corrected, and if you wish to share in this venture, I will appreciate it and your contribution of materials will be acknowledged in future editions.

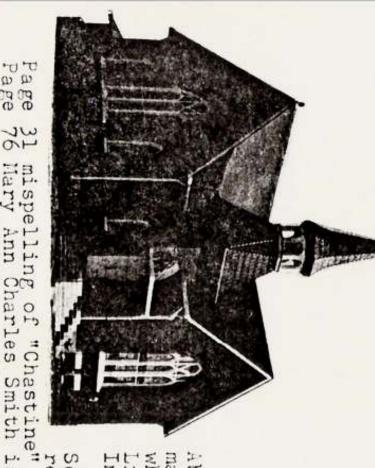
The intent of this history is not only to give facts of interest but to inspire this present and future generations to "continue in the faith once delivered unto the saints" ... lifting up Christ to a lost world ... to proclaim the Word of God in all its power and purity ... just as did the early pioneers of Ames Chapel.

Thank You

for becoming the owner of this Special Centennial Limited Edition of AMES CHAPEL METHODIST 1879-1979.

This book is number 38 of the 1st printing and is recorded with the author.

PLEASE INSERT THIS INTO YOUR AMES CHAPEL METHODIST BOOK



Ames Chapel

Nethodist

1879 - 1979

who doesn't do anything." According to Abdincoln's philosphy I'm a most industrious Individual: Abraham Lincoln said, "Show makes no mistakes and I'll "Show me a man who According to Abe snow you a man

Some mistakes "jumped out at me" as I was reading through the book..too late to correct. Mary Ann Charles Smith is the daughter of Azor Charles nor Azor Smith.

Mary AZOT Smith was her son.

Page

Page Page Page 80 Anna Halbert Charles should **read** "Knoda Halbert Charles . 86"The Wilson Kids" should be under the adult picture & "Watch Birdie" should be under children's picture with Bernice Love. 90 Danny and Marsha were married on May 10, 1975 not 1976. Halbert Charles should read "Rhoda Halbert Charles"

No doubt you will find others, for them & the above mistakes, I apologize. Hope you enjoy the book. If you care to, I would appreciate your comments on the publication. Thank you.

Sincere. Plande Devil



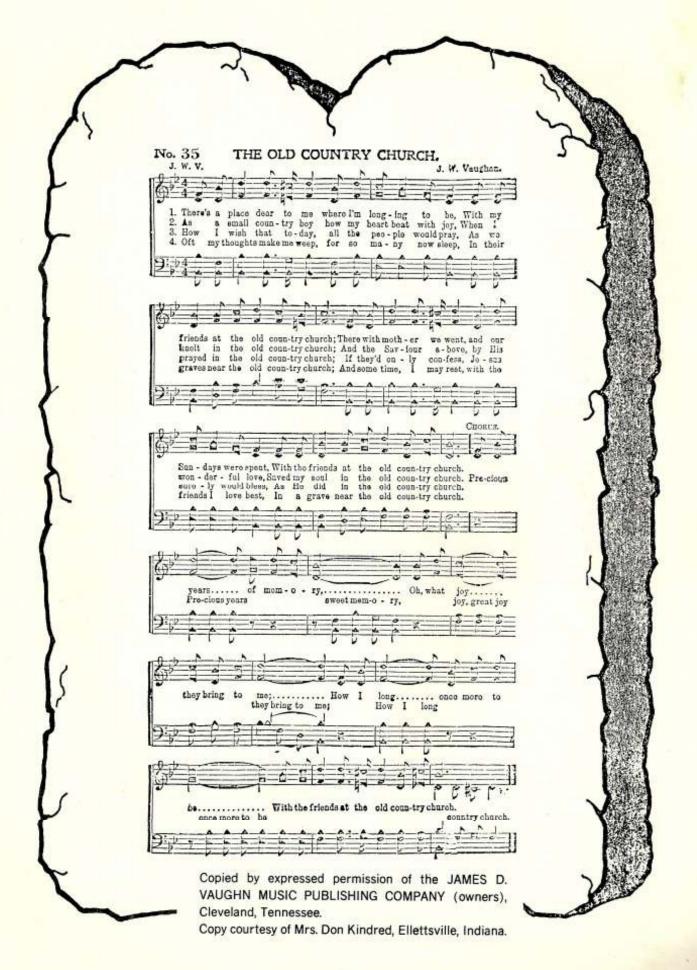


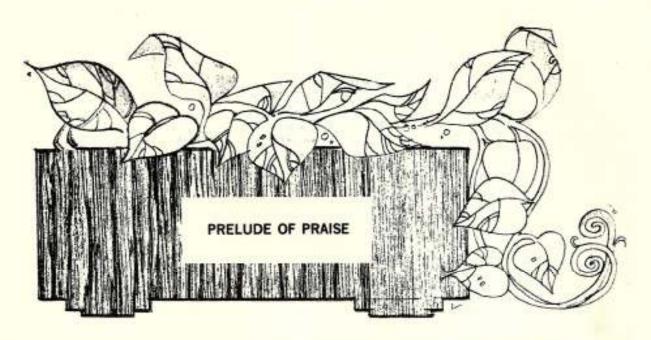


DEDICATION

This book is affectionately dedicated to the memory of my parents, Raymond L. Wilson Sr. (1898-1957) and Estelle I. Hickman Wilson (1899-1973). These precious people, known to many as "Dodger and Estelle", left a legacy of wealth to their sons, their wives and their descendants, not of "silver and gold", but that of a Godly life. It was through their guidance, example and encouragement that their three sons are deeply indebted for the "laying of their spiritual cornerstones" upon Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages, and the Word of God, from whence their personal experiences of Salvation are established

This book, although "homespun", perhaps with mistakes and errors, but humbly written from the heart, as well as from various resources, is a labor of love. It is from a deep sense of gratitude that I proudly dedicated my first published book to my parents. It is my prayer that I may hand to my children and grandchildren as good a legacy as I have received from my Mother and Daddy.





From the wonderful experience of John Wesley at Aldersgate, where his heart was "strangely warmed" with the Holy Spirit; to Francis Asbury, who followed in his footsteps and came to America from England and became the father of Methodism in the United States; to Peter Cartwright who preached the first Methodist sermon in the State of Indiana; to those dedicated, Spirit filled people, who faced the dangers of settling in Orange County and because they were not satisfied with status quo of spiritual complacency, endeavored to follow the leading of God and established places of worship where needy, hungry, thirsty souls could find their deep spiritual needs supplied; on down to this present day of September 1979, whose lives have been influenced and shaped because of the founders of Smith and Nelson Chapels, that consummated the forming of Ames Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church, we, their descendants and our friends of the present generation, come in celebration of thanksgiving for over one-hundred years of spiritual prestige in this community.

The impact of this church has not been isolated just to Orange County, Indiana. People, whose lives have been touched by its discipline and doctrine are found scattered from the East to the West coast, from our North boundaries to our South boundaries, in countries around the world, in our cities, in many churches and across the countryside. Those people who had a vision, sacrificed and worked to establish this church, little realized the wide outreach of Ames Chapel. It has been through its dedication that many have laid their "spiritual cornerstones" and established their lives for God. Many, with Spirit filled hearts and determination to live Godly, have gone out into the world to proclaim in word and deed, that "JESUS HAS A BETTER WAY" and "JESUS IS THE BETTER WAY"!

Today we join with the song writers who composed words of praise when they wrote:

"TO GOD BE THE GLORY! GREAT THINGS HE HAS DONE!"

Our hearts swell with the old melody used by many churches for many years and sung across America today:

"PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW!
PRAISE HIM ALL CREATURES HERE BELOW!
PRAISE HIM ABOVE, YE HEAVENLY HOST!
PRAISE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST! AMEN."



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THE STATE OF INDIANA	
TO ALL, WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS SENDS, GREETING:	-
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NOW KNOW YE, That the state of Indiana, in consideration of the premises and in	
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HAVE AND TO HOLD the same with all the privileges and appurtenances thereto belonging to	
and his heirs and assigns forever.	
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Issued to my great-great-greatgrandfather.

-From personal collection

EARLY INDIANA METHODISTS



JOHN WESLEY

Of all the denominations that pioneered Indiana, the Methodists were the most active. The organizations of this church with its bishops, presiding elders, circuit riders, quarterly meetings and class meetings was well adapted to conditions on the frontier. The zeal of the circuit riders was unbounded. John Wesley, after his wonderful experience at Aldersgate, came to America to preach. Francis Asbury, who followed in his footsteps, came to America in 1771 to become the "Father of Methodism in the United States" and its General Superintendent in 1784. He had a burning zeal and devotion to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all of its power and purity. He traveled thousands of miles on horseback throughout the colonies, in all kinds of weather and under the most trying circumstances.

Peter Cartwright crossed the Ohio River in 1804 and preached the first "Methodist sermon" in Indiana.

The First Methodist Church in Indiana was built in Clark's Grant four miles north of Charlestown, in what was known as the "Robertson neighborhood" in 1808 and was made part of the Silver Creek Circuit.

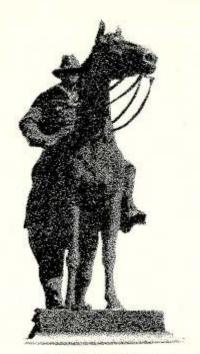
It was into this wilderness country of Indiana that the stout-hearted pioneers came to build their homes and churches and lay the foundations for the civilization we have today.

Prior to 1817 there were no roads west of White River and no bridges in Indiana. Many early settlers followed the streams which were the lines of least resistance. The buffalo trail became the Indian trail, and this became the trader's trace; the trails widened into roads and the roads into turnpikes. In 1820 Commissioners were appointed by the Indiana General Assembly to oversee the building of roads. The first stage coach line in Indiana followed the old trace from Louisville to Vincennes. It was only a dirt road by summer and a mud road by winter.

Many of the early settlers came from Virginia and North Carolina through the Cumberland Gap, either up into Ohio and west to Indiana, or up through Kentucky, across the Ohio River by ferry boat and onto the wilderness of Indiana.

Most of them brought only the bare necessities to start their new homes. Many had to walk the long, hard, dangerous journey; some rode horses and a few had oxen and horses to pull their wagons. It is interesting to note, the majority had one main ingredient they brought with them to help fortify them for the riggers of a hard pioneer life . . . their faith in God, the Bible, and their personal religious experiences. Many of them had experienced a personal "Aldersgate" warming of their souls.

ORANGE COUNTY METHODISTS



THE CIRCUIT RIDER

In 1824 Rev. Edward Smith was on the Paoli Circuit, with Rev. John Miller following in 1825. Rev. Miller brought the Word of God to 422 members on his circuit that year. Among those early worshippers in Paoli were the following families: Jackson, Osborne, Gifford, Kearby, Moore and Throop; also the McVeys, Millers, Kigers, Craigs, Stuckers, Wilsons, Collins, Coffins, Meachams, Chipmans, and Craigs.

People had been pushing West, establishing towns, hamlets, businesses and churches, onto this part of Indiana that was eventually named "Orange County" after Orange County, North Carolina, which was named after the Earl of Orange of England.

The early events and formation, that eventually led to the establishing of Ames Chapel, ties in with the early history of Orange County and the settling of Indiana. The Northwest Territory had begun to receive those hardy pioneers who sought to fulfill the desire of their hearts ... the freedom of religion and a new land for a new beginning.

Indiana was only a youthful State of twenty years and the town of French Lick (The Lick) had only a Fort and a few citizens with its official organization still twenty-one years into the future, when a class of Methodist were founded in 1836 in the neighborhood about two miles northeast of the location of the present Ames Chapel Church. It became known as the Nelson Chapel community.

Among the first members of this organization, we find the names of Allen Miller and wife; David Osborn, who was a trustee in early Methodist work in Paoli and his wife; William Stout, a school teacher, and his wife; Alfred Bruner, who attended school in Northwest Township in 1832 and helped organize Bruner's Chapel, now Wesley Chapel Methodist Church, east of Orangeville prior to the 1830's, and his wife; and others whose names are not available.

In 1842, this organization erected a log church on what years later became the property of the late Jesse and Sadie Wilson and is now owned by Preston Flick.

The church was situated on one of the main traveled roads of early Indiana, the New Albany-Vincennes stage coach road. No doubt many noted early Americans, on their way to Vincennes, saw the little chapel by the side of the road. Little did they realize its contributions to the present and future generations.

Just west of the church, about one-half mile over the hill in a valley, was an Inn, which at one time had the names of Dillinger and Campbell connected with its ownership; and these weary, worn, jolted travelers were more interested in getting there so they could refresh themselves with food and rest up for the many miles ahead.

The first pastor of Nelson Chapel Methodist Church was the Rev. Phillip May and the presiding elder was the Rev. Henry Talbott. In 1858, local historians report that James P. Campbell was engaged as a local pastor to serve the church. Later under the pastorate of the Rev. Francis Walker, the class of Nelson Chapel divided (not through a falling out but one of reaching out) to win others for Christ and enlarge their influence. At the time of the division there were about eighty people. Later a part of this class

became known as "Smith Chapel Methodist Church" and held their meetings in the home of James Hicks, where they organized a Sunday School in 1858. The following year, in 1859, they built a church building on the old Paoli-Hayesville Road.

Benjamin R. Smith and William A. Charles are numbered among the first class leaders of this church that was built about one-half mile east of the farm of the late Azor C. Smith. The farm is now owned by Russell and Alta Lewis. The first trustees were Benjamin Smith, William A. Charles, Hiram Robbins, Henry Underwood, and Calvin Sparks.

It is here that we detour a bit to give some information that might be of interest to historians, yet it all ties in with the early events leading up to Ames Chapel.

In these late years of the twentieth century one may ask, "Why did they build the churches so far back off the main roads?" We must keep in mind that the New Albany-Vincennes Road and the Paoli-Hayesville Road were some of the main roads of that day.

Today, it is hard to visualize that the present U.S. Highway 150 was just another dirt trail that led to the "Lick", fording Lick Creek at various points along the way.

An interesting bit of history concerning the building of the "Maples Wayside Inn", just west of Ames. Mr. James P. Campbell built it in 1841. From reliable sources of history we gleaned the information that Mr. Campbell had been engaged in the Inn business (either entirely or as a partnership) along the New Albany-Vincennes Road. It is surmised he was an honest, upright Christian gentleman, or else the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church would not have granted him a license to preach, much less would the local people have stood for him to minister to them. However, along with his good principles he had a good business mind and took every advantage of opportunities to advance his interest. No one could blame him for this.

Somehow he learned that the New Albany-Vincennes Road and the Paoli-Hayesville Road were to be re-routed, starting at Paoli and westward. The new route would divide at Prospect with roads going to Vincennes and one to Hayesville. He purchased a farm on Lick Creek, which included more than the present farm boundaries, knowing the new road would come through his land. So he built this large home. When the road was surveyed, it cut his farm right in two and literally nearly came to his front door.

Here he established a good business and employed various persons, among whom was my grandmother, Martha Isabelle Stackhouse (Wilson). Could it be that her employment at the Inn near the (yet to be) Ames Chapel Church was the means that influenced her to attend church there later on? And because of this she became a very strong influence of Christianity. Who knows . . . only eternity will reveal it to us.

She was a young lady, perhaps in her teens, and many times had greeted weary travelers, did housework, cooked and scrubbed floors at the Inn. It was interesting for her to watch the coachmen unload their containers of gold and put in the "lock room" (still part of the house). In that day, Mr. Campbell kept money (probably both paper bills and gold coins) in his home and acted as a bank for many people. There were no banks nearby and travel to the closest bank would mean a long, hard trip.

In 1869 a covered bridge was built over Lick Creek just west of the Inn. Previously the creek had to be forded at a low spot south of the present bridge. The dirt road was later covered with crushed stone and was known as the "Pike" until the late 1920's when it was surfaced with concrete. The new concrete road was known as the "Dixie Highway" for many years. As a young man, Harold Wilson was one of the many local people employed in its construction. During this time, the present concrete and steel bridge was built by the State of Indiana Highway Department. A picture and information about the bridge are found in this section.

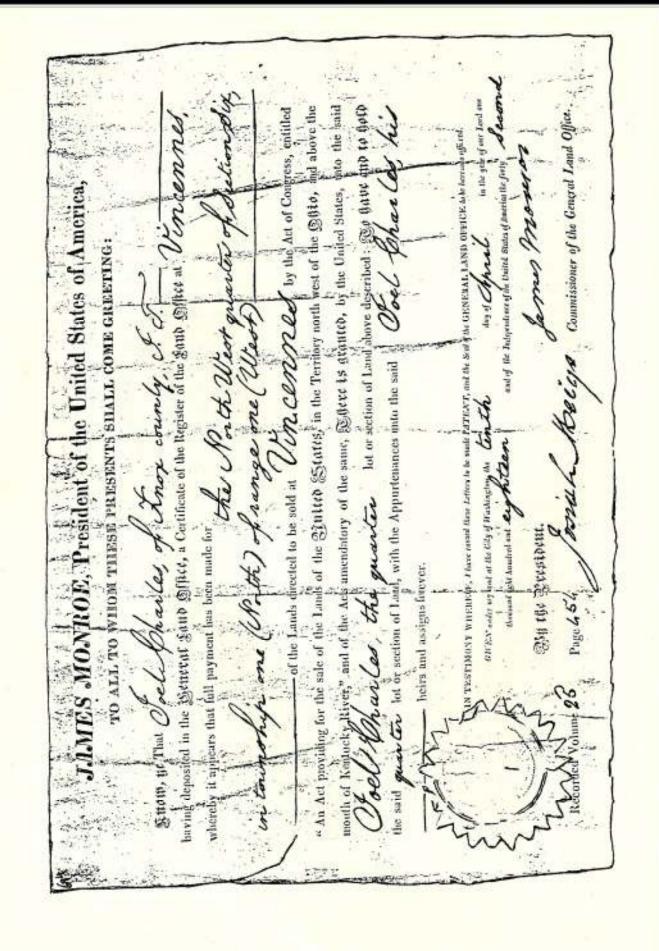




Photo courtesy of Mrs. Virginia Bran, Sr. Assistant Archives of DePauw and Indiana United Methodism Greencastle, Indiana

OLD BETHEL

The above "Old Bethel", the first Methodist Church in the State of Indiana, was originally constructed by Nathan Robertson on his farm in Clark's Grant, near Charlestown, Indiana. It was the first church in Silver Creek Circuit. Moses Ashworth, first circuit rider (pastor) in Indiana, was pastor. Moved in 1837 a quarter mile south and moved later to Lexington Highway. Abandoned in 1857 and used as a sheepfold Restored and moved to original site in 1903. Moved to Charlestown in 1925. Finally moved and restored as a shrine on the DePauw University campus. Greencastle, Indiana, in 1953-1954.

Nathan Robertson, in 1807, decided that the time had come for building a real house of worship, dedicated to the purpose. Besides neighboring churchmen, Nathan had a crew of six stalwart sons to help him. Their names were Robert, Middleton, Eli, Zephaniah, Hezekiah and James. Uniting their strength and devotion, they soon completed the "Robertson Meeting House".

This building was typical of early styles of "meeting houses" in the early 1800's

In the unpublished works of family geneology, the late Rev. Mrs. Gerene Osborn Pluris stated, and I quote." Nelson Chapel It was a large frame building about 40 feet by 70 feet. It was razed in the Fall of 1902. The sills were 12" x 12" of hand hewed white oak and the studding was 4" x 4" of yellow poplar. Alonzo Wilson helped raze the building and he told me he dragged the sills away with an old log horse named "Old Bill" and he had just all that he could pull."

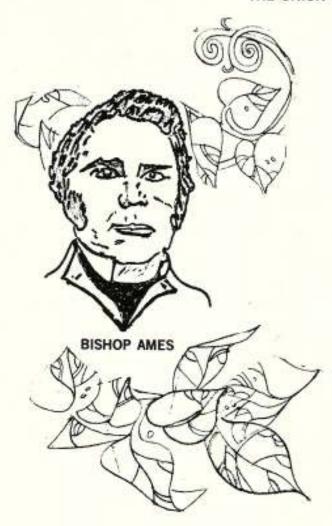


The original Ames Chapel Church and Cemetery. Picture taking about 1912 or 1913, shortly before it burned to the ground. This is an eastern view taken from the field on the Peter Pope Farm.

- Courtesy of Ora Underwood

West Baden, owner

THE UNION OF THE FAITHFUL



In the Fall of 1879, the congregations of Nelson and Smith Chapels consolidated and formed "Ames Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church". I surmise it named after the Rev. Edward Ames, a Methodist Bishop listed with the Indiana Methodist Conference in 1853 and 1854.

Moses F. Ham, the son-in-law of Alfred and Mary Wilson Bruner, deeded three acres of ground, one acre to be used as a cemetery and two acres of ground for the church building and hitching places.

The first person to be buried in the new cemetery was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Perry Campbell. Her name was Mariaha Campbell. She died on August 20, 1879 at the age of 18 years. Since that first burial the Ames cemetery has been enlarged to many times its original size.

In the Fall of 1879 they started the construction north of the present village of Abby Dell. Notley Harris was the contractor and Joe Morris, J. P. Campbell and others were carpenters. Also, the hitching places to the back of the church were a shed type building, open to the south, but enclosed to the north to protect the horses who patiently waited for their owners.

The building was one of the neatest in Orange County and cost \$1,300.00 when completed in 1880. With nearly 100 members it was one of the most energetic, prosperous organizations of the kind in the County. It had a good Sunday School with James

S. Porter as superintendent. I am told it was a beautiful, white weatherboarded, frame building, had a center front entrance (as the photographs in this book show), and faced the south. Inside, a center aisle, with heating stoves on both sides of the church. All the pews faced the front, according to the recollections of Mary E. Love, except those near the stoves which formed a ring, facing the stoves on three sides. She recalls there were no cloak rooms, so in winter the wraps were laid on the seats. The church had a bell and the custodian, Ralph Kirk, would ring it for all the services. People came from all directions on horseback, by buggies, in wagons, and many of the people from Abby Dell walked on a boardwalk along the west side of the road that extended from Lawrence Love's General Store near the railroad to the crossroads. The lumber for the construction of the walk came from a saw mill owned by Richard Lashbrook.

In the Spring of 1880, the church was finished, and Rev. Merrimon S. Haveridge of Paoli, who had pastored both the Nelson and Smith Chapels, conducted a revival meeting. In that revival, the first one to be converted was Martha Isabelle Stackhouse, the teenager that J. P. Campbell had earlier employed in his Inn. Martha bowed at the altar and prayed through to salvation.

A great revival broke out and there were many others converted. The number and names of these persons are not known—we wish we knew. But today the descendants of these people still are influenced by this revival. Oh the power of influence! Our bodies die, go back to Mother Earth, but our influence lives on and on through generation after generation.

OTHER REVIVALS

In other revivals, Mary E. Love recalls, some of the workers were Wilt Ham and his daughter, Rhoda (Mrs. Lawrence E. Tolbert Sr.) from Orangeville. Mr. Ham's melodious voice could be heard above the congregation as he led the singing. Rhoda played the organ. Remember, the organs in those days had to be pumped with your feet. This kept bellows that allowed air to go through the reeds when the keys were pressed. About the third or fourth song a person's legs were very tired. She stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Roy Kirk and daughter during the meeting.



DRAWING OF AMES CHURCH SHOWING HITCHING PLACES AND SHELTER IN BACK

Such singing, shouting and preaching and praying! It is reported that Mae Fitzpatrick would get blessed in her soul and let it be made known, while tears of joy flowed down the cheeks of Lucy Lambdin.

Look the crowd over; there was Rebecca Lashbrook as she sat smiling, with the sweet peace of heaven beaming from within, and she would occasionally nod her approval of the preaching. Her husband, Richard, sat almost spellbound as the preacher would "rightfully divide the Word of truth." Ralph Kirk sat near the door, smiling and really enjoying himself in the meeting. He was not only the custodian but he helped take up the offering for many years.

John A and Lucy Pipher Stackhouse were in those meetings, boosting, praying, and supporting the cause of the Lord for souls.

There was Charles and Minnie Pipher whose fine, two story brick home was situated just east of the old Nelson Chapel Church on the south side of the New Albany-Vincennes Road; they were there with their full support and didn't seem to mind the extra few miles to Ames. It was worth it. The author remembers that, even after they lived in Paoli on West Main Street, across from what was Ray Gardner's Sunoco Station, they faithfully attended Ames every Sunday they could for as long as health permitted.