

Four Mile Presbyterian Church
Beaver County Pennsylvania
Part II
The Church History From The Year 1876 To 1991
Updated From The Church Files

Rev. Josiah Thompson continued at Four Mile into 1878 when he took another pastorate. The pulpit was vacant until June 1880 when Rev. J. A. Edie became the next pastor.

He remained with us until 1888 when he resigned to accept a call to another congregation. Following another vacancy of six years, the Reverend J. S. T. Milligan was installed here May 11, 1892 and served the congregation for five years. Sometime after this D. M. Davis came from seminary and was ordained and installed as Four Mile's next pastor. He served only a short time, leaving in June of 1902 to accept a call to a church in Coin, Iowa. While here, however, he married a member of our congregation, Mary Isabelle Watterson, and thus left a mark on the church that is still remembered by her relatives.

In 1903, J. Alvin Hazlett was ordained and installed, making him the fifth minister to be ordained here. He stayed until 1908, having served the congregation for approximately five years. During this time the congregation declined in membership, making it necessary to yoke with another congregation in order to share the cost of a minister's salary. They agreed to yoke with a congregation called Oakland on the other side of the Ohio River.

W. D. Garges was installed. He served the Four Mile and Oakland churches jointly for a time. But the Oakland church declined to the point where it was dissolved by the Presbytery and in July, 1916, Rev. Garges resigned his position here. He was succeeded by the Reverend Vincent D. Beckett who became our congregation's eleventh pastor and served from 1917-1921.

Following Rev. Hazlett's departure, five years passed before another pastor could be secured. On September 1, 1913, The Reverend The Four Mile congregation struggled along for the next six years, unable to afford the services of a pastor. During this period the pulpit was filled by four stated supply ministers. The Rev. Charles Leiper was our stated supply minister for four months, June through September of 1922. Rev. Harold D. Hammond of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Fairview, PA began as stated supply December 1, 1923, and continued into the early part of 1924, when the congregation was again without a minister's services. In July, 1924, Rev. Orland Richie became our stated supply until he accepted a call to the Seventh Church, Pittsburgh. In April 1925, Mr. Vincent Wright, a seminary student, met with our Session and was asked to take up work as stated supply. He began work in May and continued throughout that year.

On Sunday, June 6, 1926, the Session voted to have Mr. John C. Smith of Wurtemberg take up work at Four Mile as stated supply for the summer. They liked him so well that on March 22, 1928, a formal call was made for Mr. Smith to be presented at Presbytery which was to meet at New Galilee, PA, April 10, 1928. Our Presbytery and Mr. Smith concurred and he was ordained and installed as our next pastor on May 18, 1928, also agreeing to serve as the stated supply minister for the Fairview Reformed Presbyterian Church. He resigned in the fall of 1929 and was quickly succeeded by the Rev. J. Daryl Davis who was installed on May 23, 1930 as the pastor of the Four Mile U. P. and Fairview R. P. churches. He served less than a year. In April 1931, the Rev. A. G. Montgomery began work as the stated supply minister of Four Mile Church, Fairview R. P. Church and New Salem U. P. Church. He continued as the stated supply for our congregation through the spring of 1938.

In July 1939, a call was extended to the Rev. M. Vance Yarnelle, who had been serving as our stated supply minister since Rev. Montgomery's departure. Once again the Four Mile Church became a single charge and it has continued this way up to the present. Reverend Milton M. Boos became our next pastor in the fall of 1942 and he served for two years.

A call was then extended to the Reverend Ray A. McCreight. He began his ministry with the Four Mile congregation on September 29, 1945 and was duly installed as our church's seventeenth pastor on November 8, 1945. He served the congregation well for more than forty years until his retirement in December, 1985. During his ministry many changes took place. The population of Brighton Township and surrounding areas began to grow and as a result of this and Rev. McCreight's efforts, the church's membership began growing quickly. Through his leadership a new addition was built to accommodate the needs of this growing congregation. In April 1956, the Educational wing was completed and dedicated. In 1967, another addition was built to provide office space, a fellowship hall and more Sunday School classrooms. Then in April of 1985, the most recent phase of improvement to our facilities was finished. The former sanctuary was demolished and a new sanctuary and social hall were constructed to serve the needs of a 600 member congregation. During his forty year ministry (the longest in the history of our congregation) the congregation grew from 146 members in 1945 to 577 members in 1985. It is worthy to note that his alma mater, Tarkio College, conferred on him an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in April of 1963. Following his retirement, in deep appreciation for his loving leadership, the congregation voted to confer upon him the honorary title, Pastor Emeritus. He continued to keep busy even in retirement by serving as the stated supply of three churches for an additional five years.

Rev. Joseph A. Hill served as an Interim Pastor from January through December of 1986. His task was to prepare the congregation to welcome and accept a new pastor as well as guiding and overseeing the activities of a thriving church.

In the fall of that year, the congregation voted to extend a call to the Reverend Jeffrey B. Fulford. He accepted the call and began his ministry to this congregation on January 1, 1987. Rev. Fulford accepted a call to another church in June, 1990.

Four Mile was served by three Stated Supply Ministers until March, 1991, when Rev. Joseph A. Hill became the Stated Supply Pastor.



The Pastorate Of Dr. Ray McCreight September 29, 1945 - December 31, 1985

My purpose in writing the story of the forty years as pastor of the Four Mile United Presbyterian Church, is to recount not only the history of this period but to write about the spirit of the people who were so special and how beautiful was the love within their hearts which was unlike anything I have ever experienced.

I would like to write in the first person, not to call attention to me but because it is only in so doing that I can communicate to you the reader, the continued story of a little church which was organized on the first Sabbath of July, 1812.

Between the muddy Missouri and the mighty Mississippi, in the rolling hills of southern Iowa, I grew up on a one hundred sixty acre farm, three miles north of town. It was during the Great Depression. We rented our farm and owned very little of this world's goods.

But we were happy! Walking six miles to and from school did not seem like a hardship. Perhaps we were

happier in those days because we were forced to make our own entertainment, using a child's wild imagination.

In the eighth grade, we studied Iowa history. Our little town of five hundred was first settled by a man from Clearfield, Pennsylvania who named our small midwestern town after his home town back East.

Growing up on the farm was the ideal background for the ministry. Attending a small high school with thirty six in my class, the largest class ever to graduate from our school, and studying for my college degree in a small United Presbyterian College in Tarkio, Missouri, were also very important in preparation for the ministry. In these small schools, I was able to establish a close relationship with each teacher and this was priceless. I doubt if I would have had the joy of becoming a pastor of a church like Four Mile, had it not been for the Holy Spirit providing these great opportunities through close relationships with teachers and professors who were interested in each of us and always willing to work on a "person to person" basis. The help with our studies, they gave us, was perhaps not as important as their guidance in helping us discover what we should do with our lives. As the result of their personal interest, their ability to motivate and challenge us, I was able to grow from a "daydreaming, C/D student," in high school to an honor graduate from college. Had I attended a large school, I would have drifted along and maybe amounted to nothing.

Preachers are always emphasizing the power of the Holy Spirit. I witness to this truth. In my sophomore year in high school, "things began to happen." There can be no other explanation but that the Holy Spirit was guiding me and enabling me to do things I would never have thought of doing.

I was the youngest of six children, the only one born in a hospital, Creston, Iowa. Although life on the farm was very quiet, I loved every minute of it. When you study the great characters of the Biblical History, you discover that most of them spent time in the quiet places of life before God called them to do His work. Moses spent years on the backside of the desert, not realizing at the time that he was being prepared for the Lord's call which came to him in the experience of the Burning Bush which was not consumed by fire. Living on the farm is a lonely experience. But because I spent so much time alone, cultivating corn on a hot summer afternoon, the cultivator pulled by a team of horses, or driving the tractor on my uncle's farm near Sterling, Kansas, at the time of the wheat harvest, I had a lot of time to think. There is something wonderful about spending time in a quiet place. Sometimes the only way that God can get through to us is in the "quiet of life." Such was the experience of Elijah when he heard the Lord, not in the thunder or lightning, or the "wind which rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord, or the earthquake or the fire, but in a still small voice."

God spoke! Everyone knew what He was saying but me. My friends at home and in Tarkio would always say, "you are going to be a minister." A Methodist minister who had considerable influence on my life said to me one day, "I will never be satisfied until I hear that you have entered the ministry." I drifted into seminary. But four years after being the minister at Four Mile, I suddenly realized that I would be AWOL with the Lord if I were to quit. The road I had traveled had actually been straight, and there had been a green light all the way.

A very important part of my preparation was to grow up in a Christian home with Godly parents, attending church twice a day on Sunday. To this day I think of returning home on Sunday night with the traditional supper of bread and milk, after church, about nine o'clock in the evening.

It is amazing how the direction of one's life can be changed by what at the time may seem very insignificant. In the fall of my senior year, 1944, I had been preaching at Elderton and Shallocta near Indiana, Pennsylvania. The area was beautiful and I began to dream of the joy of being the pastor of these churches in this rural area, bursting with the beautiful creations of nature. However, in early fall, the

elders asked if I would be interested in candidating and become their minister. With little thought, I answered, "No, it would be too early; I should wait until spring." I knew that by that time, they would have called another minister. I dismissed any further thought of being the pastor of these churches.

One night in April, a student from Beaver, asked if anyone would be interested in preaching at a church called Four Mile, seven miles out of Beaver. I said, "I would." Little did I realize that I would spend forty years at this church, loving and being loved by the members of the congregation and community in what became an experience far, far, beyond that of which I had ever dreamed. At first, I told my friends I would be at Four Mile about two years and then I would look forward to a church in the city. I thought I loved, and was excited with the city. But with the coming of spring that first year, "I came to myself." I realized I never wanted any part of the city.

How true the old phrase, "You can take the boy off the farm, but you cannot take the farm out of the boy." I hated to work in the garden at home. Now I loved gardening. Each Sunday morning, there were several critics who looked long and hard to find some weeds.

I discovered that the secret to these warm friendly people was love. Not the love that dies with the first misunderstanding but a deep abiding love which can stand the stress which sooner or later is placed on a friendship.

It was the type of love which accepts the minister as one of the family. I was invited to dinner almost every night. In fact, I began to feel guilty. When I made a call after four o'clock in the afternoon, and the time came to go, the family on whom I had called would say, "Won't you stay for dinner?" These were great opportunities to develop close friendships with the people of the church. There is something about "Breaking bread together," which makes this possible. Did not Jesus accomplish much of his work as he "Sat at meal with his friends and the lost.

I was taken into the home of the congregation like a member of the family. I became the brother, the son, the uncle, and I thought to myself, "Is this really work?" As the years passed I, who at the age of twenty three, looked to the church as a place to "start," and then move on to bigger and better things, was so happy and thrilled that I kept saying to myself, "I hope they still want me, it would be so hard to leave." Because I had plenty of time in those early days, I had a very close relationship with the young people. We met on Sunday evenings for worship and discussion. Every Monday evening, we went to the light operas at Pitt Stadium where we saw "Annie Get Your Gun," and during those early years almost every show that was popular. I never had any trouble finding parents to take a car load of youth. Often young people whose parents had a station wagon would say, "My dad, says you can drive his car to Pittsburgh." One day we went swimming in Erie and I accepted the offer of "Dad's Chrysler." I would have given anything to have had my forty-nine Ford because the front wheels wobbled all the way to Erie and back. We had "Fun Nights" every Thursday evening. Often I would invite the youth to the parsonage where they would take over the entire house, watching TV upstairs, playing pingpong in the basement, listening to records in the living room, while some of the girls made cheeseburgers in the kitchen.

During the week, when I would be driving home and stop behind a school bus, the Four Milers would get out of the bus and I would take them home often stopping at some youth's home to talk a few minutes. Our parties were held in the back of the church; there was no basement. I could never take much credit for the youth program because I needed them as much as they needed a good pastor. They called me Uncle Ray, and this continued until retirement. I loved it. They filled a void in my life.

As I look back now, I wonder how I got by with some of the things we did without parents objecting to the late hours we kept. But that was another day. At eleven o'clock playing those old fashioned games in the back of the church on party night, I would say, "It is time to go home." They would answer, "Just one more

game." I was as anxious to play that game as they. By the time I looked at my watch again, it would be twelve o'clock. At one party, New Year's Eve, we played "those games, until four o'clock in the morning. As the years passed, the church grew, I became the administrator, the manager, no longer able to have the relationship with the youth I once had. It was still possible to be close to them because I taught the eighth grade young people in the Communicant's Class. At one time, we had one hundred and fifty youth attending regularly on a Sunday evening with twelve to fourteen leaders.

Love always makes a bigger circle. With the growth of the church, love continued to grow. One elder used to say that the congregation reflects the attitude of the minister. I would add to that, I reflected the attitude of the congregation, their love.

In an article written for the Beaver County Times, the author, a member of the congregation wrote, "His legacy of love remains." No greater compliment could be given me. But it is also a word of commendation for the congregation. The greatest love is that which is given and received and when it is received, it is given.

Our family experienced rare illnesses. I had my own time of darkness when I suffered from very serious depression and anxiety. One sometimes wonders why serious illness occurs. A Methodist minister wrote that if Joseph were being interviewed today and he were asked the question. "What is the worst thing that ever happened to you?" He would answer, "When I was thrown into the pit by my brother." If he were then asked, "What is it which made you the famous person you have become, the governor of Egypt?" He would answer, "Being thrown into the pit by my brothers."

Similarly, it was our medical problems which enabled me to be a better pastor, because I understood. I understood problems of the blood, seizures, depression, anxiety and other sufferings from which members of the congregation might be having a very difficult time.

In the book, "The Wounded Healer," the author writes, "On the one hand, no minister can keep his own experience of life hidden from those he wants to help. Nor should he want to keep it hidden. While a doctor can still be a good doctor even when his private life has been disrupted, no minister can offer service without a constant and vital acknowledgement of his own experiences. One's own wounds become a source of healing."

Another reason why Four Mile was some place special was that the congregation accepted the fact that ministry is the work of ALL the people of God. No church can be so effective as that church which accepts ministry as the responsibility of the members of the congregation. We had the joy of contributing to the book, "Churches Alive." The author wrote on the subject of ministry as it should be, a sharing responsibility between pastor and congregation. The pastor is the "coach," not the star "quarterback;" he is the "conductor," not the "soloist." It is so important that we recapture this idea that ministry is the work of all people of God.

Sometimes ministers feel threatened, says the author. There are lay-persons who can do a better job than the preacher. There are other clergy who feel so fortunate to have this great talent in the church they serve.

To become a minister, I received nineteen years of academic education, plus graduate work. I received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Tarkio College, a Bachelor of Divinity Degree from Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary which was later elevated to a Masters Degree, and an Honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree from Tarkio College.

After a short time, finally doing the work I was called to do, I realized my preparation for the ministry was

lacking something which was indispensable to any success I hoped to achieve in my profession, and it could never be learned from books.

When you accept your first charge, you are out to save the world. You know it all! You have many programs and ideas which will make this church grow by leaps and bounds in a matter of time. But soon you become aware of how little you know. There are great lessons to be learned if you are ever to become an effective minister. You did not learn them in Seminary. You learn humility the hard way. Instead of thinking you can save the world, you begin to wonder if you can save anyone. You become aware of how little you really know which is indispensable to your ministry. But you learn, even though some of the lessons are learned the hard way.

The members of the congregation became my teachers. They criticized me, commended me, loved me, and encouraged me. I learned, but I made a lot of mistakes. What amazed me was that it was always my best friends who told me of a criticism they had heard. Perhaps those who love you the most cannot bear to see you criticized and will tell you what they have heard. Your first reaction is to want to run away. But if you do, you will always be running.

Those ministers who are always running will stay in a church three or four years. They make mistakes as all of us do. But instead of trying to correct those mistakes, they go to another church and make them all over again.

Whenever I would hear a criticism, especially in those early days, I would watch for the opportunity to make a call on the family which was natural and expected. I seldom called attention to the problem. What was absolutely unbelievable was that the calls were fun, everyone was very friendly and it was hard to believe that there was some misunderstanding or problem. However, the Holy Spirit was working, I learned. A closer relationship always developed between me and the family.

I remember one time when it was necessary to bring a misunderstanding out in the open. We discussed the problem for about an hour and a half. I looked at the clock and saw that it was late afternoon, and I should leave. My friend said, "Won't you stay for dinner." I did, and through all the years I never had a closer, more loyal loved one.

Friendship has to be tested to become real. Until that time, it is like the righteousness of Adam and Eve. Their innocence did not mean a thing until it was tested. They failed the test. When friends have a misunderstanding, yet it does not effect the relationship between them, the friendship has stood the test. The relationship becomes closer, stronger, and never threatened by problems. Sad to say, there are some friends, whose relationship is superficial. It falls apart the first time there is a problem.

Such was the love at Four Mile. It was deep, abiding, loyal, reflecting sincere devotion.

One day, I came to the conclusion that if I had done anything worthwhile at the church I had served for forty years, it was the result of the tremendous support of the people who were always giving me loving encouragement and commendation. How could one fail to do his best when the Holy Spirit was using the people of the church to prayerfully support their pastor. Whatever I accomplished, the congregation, used of the Spirit, made it possible.

I was reminded of how Moses held up his hands when Israel was at war with Amalek. As long as Moses could hold up his hands, Israel won the battle. But Moses' hands became tired. Aaron and Hur supported his hands. With the going down of the sun, Israel had won. There are many Aarons and Hurs at Four Mile. With this congregation, I was able to do things I never dreamed of. The Holy Spirit moved in many ways through the members of the church. The pastor does not have a monopoly on the Spirit. The wise

minister will be alert to this and blessed by it.

My job description in coming to Four Mile was to "mow the lawn." It seems that the former pastor did not mow the lawn except for a path to the mail box. I was told that when he went out to the mailbox, all you could see was his head over the top of the grass. The person who told me this did so with a straight face. I could hardly keep from bursting out laughing. I could see in my mind, this man going after the mail, his head moving over the top of the grass.

When I came, the lawn was in somewhat better condition. The neighbor's bull had been tied up out front, standing knee deep in grass, surely in his glory.

Since I came in 1945, all buildings have been replaced. In the spring of 1948, the Trustees received a bid to construct a basement under the church for \$12,000. It was a very serious group of men who stood in the back corner of the sanctuary that Sunday afternoon, convinced that their grandchildren would be paying for this building project. Actually, the basement was paid for in a very short time.

The church grew rapidly. An educational unit was constructed at the front of the sanctuary. The sanctuary was renovated with a divided chancel. This project was completed in 1956.

Continued growth resulted in the construction of a brick educational unit parallel to the sanctuary, 1967. This included a beautiful study, church office, library, and a huge dining room. We had expert leadership. Although I sat in on some of the Building Committee meetings, it was not necessary for me to assume much responsibility. I was consulted about those matters which had to do directly with worship and Christian Education.

One time I visited the new church of a friend of mine. As we sat in the study, you could hear every word the secretary said. I knew immediately that this must be corrected at Four Mile. How could anyone talk about a heartache, or some serious confidential problem if they felt they could be heard in the next room. The committee responded by using an acoustic ceiling, carpet on the floor, book shelves along the wall which separated the study and the office and the 2 x 4s were split. It was a very quiet study.

In 1972, the old parsonage was torn down and a new one constructed. The old sanctuary was demolished and a new one dedicated in 1985. Once again, I observed the strength of character of the people of Four Mile. There was a sizeable minority who objected to the construction of the new manse at this time. Yet several of those who did not think it should be built at this time, came and helped with its building.

Similarly, it was very hard for those who had worshipped in the old sanctuary for years to see it torn down. It was beautiful in a historic way, having been built before the nineteen hundreds. It was a beautiful old colonial church, filled with many precious memories for those who had been there through many years. You could not help but think of those persons of strong faith who kept the church alive and moving since its founding in 1812. However, wisdom seemed to say that its condition was such that it had served its purpose and needed to be replaced. Yet no person who felt so deeply about the old church left Four Mile. As my ministry came to a close, I began to look back over the years which had passed so quickly. As the psalmist writes in the 90th Psalm, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is passed, or as a watch in the night. . . our years are soon gone, and we fly away."

The time had come for me to step down. I wanted to leave while people wanted me to stay, and not when they wanted me to leave. As I reflected over the years, and now the coming of the end, I thought of one of the beautiful traditions of childhood growing up on the farm in southern Iowa. Our close friends lived a mile away. This was the nearest farm. When my sister and I went to play with our friends and the time

came to leave, we would ask their mother, "May Karl and Helen walk a piece with us?"

The answer was always, "Yes." There were limitations given to us. They were not to go any further than the old windmill in the pasture, or the red school at the crossroads. When the time of departure came, we would talk as long as we dared, and then run home as fast as possible because we were late.

Is this not what life is all about? We "walk a piece" with our loved ones, friends, those who are lonely, hurting, in sorrow or in joy. In the church, what a joy it was to walk a piece with so many friends, some of whom are no longer with us and have entered the "church triumphant."

The greatest walk of all is with Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. A walk which ends in that life which shall endless be. It is our commitment to the Lord which gives all other walks meaning and purpose.

When the time came to ask the Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship between me and the congregation, I could no longer take part in ministry except at the invitation of the new minister.

The retiring minister, however can and should maintain the friendships established through the years, and show his concern for the problems and illnesses from which his friends may be suffering.

After five years, serving as Interim Pastor in three churches, we decided that we should quit for good. I was invited to sing in the choir at Four Mile. This was like coming home because I had spent so much time singing in choirs in church, high school, college, seminary and the Mendelsohn Choir in Pittsburgh. I never ceased to appreciate the fact that I was welcome in the choir during my years as pastor. (Some congregations do not like the idea of the minister singing in the choir.) What a joy it has been, what a privilege for me to "walk a piece," with so many wonderful people with whom we did our best to do the work of the Lord.

"And when having done all, we may seem at times to have failed, in the name of Him who was made perfect through suffering, we may look up unashamed and hear His voice say: 'My grace is sufficient for thee'." Amen.



The Story Of The Four Mile Church Communion Table Cloth

In his Gettysburg address during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln said, "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here but it will never forget what they did here." When he finished speaking, the audience was silent! But there was a thunderous applause for the previous speaker who had spoken over an hour.

The truth was that the people at Gettysburg were so moved by what Lincoln had to say, that they remained silent; not a person moved, not a sound was heard. Lincoln's Gettysburg address has been recited at Memorial Day Services, Fourth of July Celebrations, Patriotic Observances, and at any special occasion when the thoughts of Americans turn to one of the most horrible wars our country has ever fought. It stands with "Flanders Field," which is identified with the first World War and other great writings of our Nation's history.

We are in debt to the past! How tragic it will be if we forget this fact! Those of us who are older and many

who are younger are emotionally moved when we hear the band play, "The Star Spangled Banner;" a famous chorus sing, "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;" or worshipers on a Sabbath morning, stand and sing "America." There is one fear which many of us have and that is that our children growing up today will not be taught to appreciate our Nation's past.

The same thing is true of our church! So much of what we have today has been given to us by those early settlers who had a dream, a vision of a church, which was organized on the first Sabbath of July 1812.

Among the historic treasures we cherish is a Communion Cloth which was made by Mrs. Mary (Polly) McGaffick who raised the flax, using the fiber of the plant to spin the thread which was used to make the Communion Table Cloth. It is amazing how many great, great, etc. grandchildren there are (and have been) members of Four Mile Church who are descendants of Polly McGaffick.

Mrs. Elizabeth Carnes had taken care of the cloth for many years. In the early part of my ministry, she gave the cloth to the church explaining to me that Mrs. Polly McGaffick was her great, great grandmother.

The lineage of Mrs. Polly McGaffick can be found in the back of this book.



The Chancel Area Furnishings

The two chairs and settee with the red velvet covering, that are now in the Narthex, were originally covered with horsehair. Several years ago the Scott Bible Class had them refinished. The marble topped table, also in the Narthex, was at one time the Communion Table. The two silver cups, pitchers and plates on display in the Secretary, also in the Narthex, were used for Communion in the early church. We do not know just how old all of these items are but, perhaps, when the old sanctuary was built in 1872 it was furnished with the setee, chairs and table. It is thought that the silver service is older.

The old pulpit that is sitting in the Green Room of the brick addition, was in the old sanctuary.

In the late 1940's, with the congregation growing, a larger Communion Table was needed. An oak table was given to the church for that purpose and sat in front of the steps to the chancel area. Sometime later two matching chairs were given. These pieces are still in the church.

The settee, chairs, marble topped table, the oak Communion Table and chairs and the pulpit were replaced when the sanctuary was remodeled in 1956.



Communion In The Early Church

When Communion was to be held, the pastor would call for a short recess during the worship service to prepare for the Communion Service. Elders of the church would get the board reserved for making a table for Communion and set it on two stands about table height. The board was about eighteen inches wide and eight to ten feet long. On either side of the table a bench was placed for people to sit upon. The Communion table cloth that was made by Mrs. Mary (Polly) McGaffick about 1815 was used as the cover. We are told that when the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered, a song was sung while

members of the congregation came forward and took places around the table. Two cups and two pitchers dated 1888, which are still in the church, were used in this service. All drank from the common cup. After each had taken from the cup, an elder standing behind those seated at the table, would move the cup to the next partaker. After all those at the table had taken of the bread and wine, the congregation would sing again until they returned to their seats and others had come forward.

Several of the present members who joined the church in the 1920's remember taking Communion this way. The congregation numbered sixty-five in 1920.



Sunday School

In the 130 years since Sunday School was started at Four Mile in 1861, there have been many dedicated Christian Sunday School teachers who have directed a lot of youths and adults to a more Christian life through timely teaching.

The names of the classes usually change after a decade or two but some in our church lasted longer, although now they have been dropped or changed. The Josephine White Missionary Society became the U. P. Women's Association and later the Presbyterian Women's Association. The original name was for one of the class members.

The Anna McCune Bible Class, named for one of its members, was in existence prior to 1930 and continued until 1989. When the attendance was down, it combined with another class. Mrs. Lillian McDole was the teacher of the Anna McCune Class for about forty-seven years. The Scott Bible Class was another adult class that lasted for quite a few years, but the attendance declined until it was also disbanded.

The classes in existence today (1991) have all been named since about 1950.



The Associate Presbyterian Church of 1812 To The Presbyterian Church, USA, 1990

The Four Mile Church was organized the first Sabbath of July 1812, on a tract of ground known as the "Four Mile Square," which was the second section of land measured off west of the Beaver River by an act of legislature for the purpose of redeeming or enhancing the value of the depreciated certificates of the soldiers of the Revolution.

At the time of organization, Four Mile became a member of the Associate Presbyterian Church of the Presbytery of Ohio.

On May 26, 1858, the United Presbyterian Church of North America was organized with the union of the Associate Presbyterian Church and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

One hundred years later, the United Presbyterian Church of North America had grown from a membership of 54,798 to 331,000. Similarly, the Presbyterian Church, USA, had increased to an enrollment of 2,809,600, believed to be the fourth largest denomination in the United States.

One century after the United Presbyterian Church of North America was established, the United Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church, USA, joined together to form the United Presbyterian Church of the United States of America. The union resulted in a membership of 3,240,000.

This union, however, lacked one denomination to make it complete. In 1983, the two largest Presbyterian denominations joined together with the reunion of the Southern Church and the United Presbyterian, USA, to form the Presbyterian Church, USA. As Presbyterians of Four Mile, we are members of this denomination and, theologically, members of the Reformed Family of Faith, followers of John Calvin, one of the great leaders of the Reformation after Martin Luther.



The Four Mile U. P. Church Cemetery

The Four Mile Presbyterian Church cemetery was established adjacent to the congregation's first house of worship, in the hollow about one-quarter mile east of the present church.

For many years there was little or no maintenance of the cemetery until a group of young people took on the task in 1971 and did cleaning up along with cataloging the names on the tombstones. A few years later another group of church members again went to work at the cemetery, this time digging out brush and trees and in general cleaning the area including where the old brick church stood.

In 1988, Michael E. James took as his Eagle Scout Project the renovation and repair of the cemetery. With the consent of the Trustees, Michael with some friends spent many hours cleaning the area to its original boundary, cutting down trees, removing underbrush, marking the corners with permanent markers, leveling the ground where it had sunk and cleaning and repairing tombstones as well as resetting those that could be reset.

A plot plan showing the grave locations and listing the names of the ninety persons buried in the cemetery was presented to the Trustees upon completion of the project.

There are two known Civil War soldiers buried in the cemetery and there could be more.

There is on file with other church historical memorabilia a copy of a letter from Thomas B. McGaffick dated March 17, 1862. It was from a Union Army camp and sent to his sister Mary. His death is listed on his tombstone as July 5, 1863.

The grandparents of our Pastor Joseph A. Hill, William and Mary Lister, are buried in the cemetery.

The oldest date of burial in the cemetery was 1799, the latest date 1895.



The Church Water Supply

For many years the church and manse had a common water supply. There were two 5000+ gallon brick cisterns that collected rain water from the roof of the church. One cistern was partially filled with sand and

as the water entered it the water was filtered through the sand and drained into the second cistern. An electric pump drew the water from the second cistern, pumping it into a pressure tank and from there it was distributed through the church and over to the manse. In dry weather, the Ohioville Fire Department would be contacted to bring a tanker load of water to do until the next rain.



Sanctuary Lighting

At the time when evening services were started in the old sanctuary, light was supplied by individual kerosene oil lamps. The lamps sat in a holder that fit into a permanent bracket at each window or where light was needed. Each bracket had a reflector in back of it to help increase the light.

In addition there was a chandelier hanging in the center of the sanctuary which was a hollow copper ring at least six feet in diameter and had about twelve kerosene lamps positioned on it. The ring was suspended by chains to a center point above the lamps then to a rope which extended up thru a hole in the ceiling and over a pulley which was attached to one of the roof beams. This permitted the raising and lowering of the chandelier for filling the ring with kerosene and the lighting of lamps. We don't know where the free end of the rope went, but assume it came down along the east wall. (The raising and lowering of the chandelier is conjecture by the writer. The other information is from members who went to church here when the chandelier was used.)

Years later when the pressurized gasoline light came into being, there were three double light fixtures put in the sanctuary over each aisle. They were hung low enough to be reached from the floor.

These fixtures provided more light. Each double light had it's own tank for fuel and air pump to pressurize the tank to provide the right mixture of gas and air to keep it burning. Each light had an ash mantle which glowed bright white when heated like the Coleman camp lamp used today.

At times the minister had more air than the tank so the light would have to be taken down and pumped up during the service.

We have a couple of the lamp fixtures, one globe but no tanks.

Then electricity reached Four Mile. The electric light fixtures in the sanctuary were suspended from the ceiling on a long chain. A large bulb inside of a large white globe gave more adequate light.



Rememberings

In talking to some of the people who have been associated with Four Mile for up to seventy years or more, all had a story to tell of things they remembered.

Some cherished the memory of the wedding and the pastor who married them, others the lasting friendships that grew from associations at Four Mile.

It seems that each family had a favorite tree to tie their horses to, so by looking at the horses you knew who was in church. Every tree had a metal ring in it for tying the horse.

Snow made for fun times with sleds and sleighs but curtailed the traveling and getting together. In the winter it was only those who sat close to one of the two pot bellied stoves in the church who stayed warm, at least on one side. Extra robes or blankets were standard equipment.

In the fall of the year for many years, apple butter was made by some of the women of the church. The men helped too by setting up the big copper or copper lined kettles, supplying the fire wood and helping to tend the fires.

On day one the women pared the five or more bushels of apples and the men set up the kettles. On day two the three kettles were filled with the pared apples; some boiled down apple cider (or water if the cider was not available) and cooked for hours while being stirred with long handled paddles. When the 25 to 30 pounds of sugar were added near the end of the boiling process, the stirring did not stop as it kept the apple butter from sticking to the pot. Lots of cinnamon was used for flavor. When the apple butter was declared done, it was ladled into clean hot jars, capped, and set aside to cool.

The three kettles filled from 150 to 200 quart jars to sell with the proceeds going to the women's project.



Epilogue

Walking among the stone markers in the old Four Mile cemetery, one recalls the psalmist's lament: "As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more" (Psalm 103: 15, 16). The church, the living body of Christ, however, continues in perpetuity.

The present congregation is linked to the past by family connections, as the foregoing genealogies show. Some of our younger members are seventh and eighth generation descendants of early Four Mile members. This family lineage is a living confirmation of the permanence of God's covenant love - in contrast to human transience. Our days are like grass which flourishes for a season, whereas "the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children" (Psalm 103:17).

Important as kinship and lineage are, the church is bound together more essentially by God's covenant. God's love in Christ is the ultimate tie that binds us as sisters and brothers in the family of God. As we seek to comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of divine love (Ephesians 3:18, 19), our own capacity for love is expanded and we are better able to accomplish our mission in the world as an agency of God's love and justice.

Four Mile's ministries and long-range plans are integrated with the global mission enterprise of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Our World vision, appropriately, incorporates the eternal as well as the temporal. The church's past history is less determinative of its life in the world than is the vision of its eternal destiny. In its earliest days, Four Mile Church got its name from the size and shape of a land grant and was known as the Four Mile Square Congregation. The geographical symbol has its ideal counterpart in the final vision of Revelation: the city of God that "lies foursquare, its length the same as its width" (Revelation 21:16). Like the four-dimensional love of Christ, the eternal reality surpasses

knowledge. The gold city, the pearl gates, the gem-studded wall, and the foursquare design are but dim reflections of the splendor and perfect symmetry of the new Jerusalem.

This is the ideal, of which the Four Mile Church is only a shadow. Its life in the world is marked by toil and tribulation, setbacks and struggles. But being built on the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets, the church even now bears a resemblance to the heavenly vision with which "her longing eyes are blest."



Information for this book came from the following sources:

Church Files:

A History of Four Mile by Rev. Isaiah Thompson 1812-1876

Part II Updated 1876 to 1991 and Pictures

Members and Former Members:

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mrs. Lillian McDole | Mrs. Elsie Graham |
| Mrs. Ethyl Carnes Hoop | Mrs. Matilda Logan |
| Mrs. Augusta Brown | Mr. & Mrs. Ed Stout |
| Mr. & Mrs. Willard McGaffick | Mrs. Fern Graham |
| Mr. & Mrs. Joe McCarthy | Mr. Daniel C. Baker Sr. |
| Mrs. Jeanette Barclay Graham | Anyone I missed |

Tape by Mr. Hugh Graham (1976)

By Dr. Ray A. McCreight:

The Pastorate of Dr. Ray A. McCreight

The Four Mile Church Communion Table Cloth

Mrs Mary (Polly) McGaffick Lineage

From the Associate Church to the Presbyterian Church

Bausman's History of Beaver County I & II; History

Pictures: Bruce Shakely

Typing: Judy Powell

Epilogue: Rev. Joseph A. Hill

All other items: Editor - Ray Anderson

The picture on page 1 is of the oak tree at the south end of the west parking lot. It is growing adjacent to the location of the old Tuscarawas Road and although it probably wasn't old enough to have been used to tie a horse to in 1872, it has watched the church grow through the years. [Pg 56]

With Thanks to Jeanne Hall [Beaver County CC 2000-2015]

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[Note: I did not correct the mis-spellings, the information and content is 'as is']

Martha A Crosley Graham, Beaver County Coordinator 2015 > Current