



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
22 CHURCH STREET
GOUVERNEUR, NY 13642

FPCGH-4a
THE SESQUICENTENNIAL PROGRAM COMMITTEE Of
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PRESENTS
LIVING PICTURES OF THE YEARS 1817 – 1967
By MRS. WALLACE THOMPSON
PRESENTED ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1967
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GOUVERNEUR, NEW YORK

The year was 1822. Mr. James Monroe of Va. was our fifth president of these United States. The Mississippi River was practically the western boundary of our country, and our flag had 24 stars. The war between the United States and Great Britain was over, and on Sunday, July 27, 1817, in this little town of Cambray, the Congregational Society of this present Presbyterian Church became legally organized, with corporate power. There were approximately 50 members, a tremendous growth since the days of the first settlers, but let us go back to those days, and mentally touch the cornerstones of Cambray's early religious development.

CHORAL GROUP

Be it known in the young 1800s, so historians do relate,
Four pioneer families with firm resolve, to this town did immigrate.
'Twas not by accident they landed here,
but rather with firm intention.
They had found at last, the land of Cambray,
which their official maps did mention.

From such humble beginnings, our village of Gouverneur was carved from a bleak and desolate wilderness, inhabited by bands of St. Regis Indians, always sly and full of plans to harass the settlers. In 1805, four intrepid adventurers braved the perils of this northern country, and found the land of Cambray. The following year, Pardon Babcock, Willard Smith, Eleazer Nichols, and Isaac Austin, with their families, returned to this area to build a new town. The women and children were left in Antwerp, while the men cut trees for homes. Courage and determination were needed in vast quantities to face the unknown perils ahead, and these people possessed these qualities in abundance. Mr. Austin's wife was a helpless invalid,

physically, being brought overland in a crib, prepared for this purpose. For thirty years, Mrs. Austin directed the affairs of her household from her bed. She was also a dominant figure in the affairs of the town, as one of the ministers later found out. History tells that one day an itinerant minister came to town on horseback to preach a sermon. However, upon arriving at Mrs. Austin's door, he found that all the men were in the woods or fields, so he changed his mind, but only temporarily. Mrs. Austin informed him that the women of the town needed to hear the word of the Lord just as much as the men did, and he was to give them a sermon right there in her house. So the women were rounded up. The minister decided to accede to the wishes of "the weaker sex", and forth with gave them a sermon, after which, he doubtless escaped on horse back.

Historical sources inform us that these people were Baptists, and indeed, they deserve attention here. No religious lines were drawn for several years, and these Baptist settlers acted when needed for weddings, funerals or other religious requirements. We believe it can be said that our Presbyterian cradle was rocked by our Baptist neighbors.

Mr. Austin assumed responsibility for these first families. They were fortified with maps, as prepared by the agents of Mr. Gouverneur Morris, who had bought huge tracts of this northern country. Mr. Austin was director of the first water. He had planned carefully that there would be plenty of food, and clothing to supply his flock through that first winter, so that no one would go hungry. However, Mr. Austin made one big mistake. He did not figure on the trickery of the Indians. As just one example: On the first day of January, 1809, a company of Indians made a formal visit at the house of Mr. Austin, having previously informed him of their intentions. They numbered about one dozen, and were arrayed in their best paint and feathers. They went into the house, and waited for dinner: roast ribs, fried cakes, bread and wine, after which they smoked their pipes of marble and buck-horn. They then returned to their homes, probably in better condition than many who have since made New Year's calls.

CHORAL GROUP

In Antwerp, these settlers left women and youth,
As the men cut trees, tall and strong –
For housing and shelter for each of their kin,
And the forests rang with their song.

Do you know what these people brought?
'Twas said there was little they lacked –
Eleven hundred pounds of pork,
Boned, salted, and packed.
The coopers had carefully made the barrels
To hold spices before they started, -
With sacks of sugar and packs of tea
For these pioneers, stouthearted.
Eight bushels of beans were stowed away, too,
With coffee --- from the time of arrival
They hoped they would be fully supplied,
To maintain their own survival.
They reckoned however, without Indian tribes,
Who oft' appeared in relays,
And food before them did a vanishing act
Like snow on summer days.

By 1812, many new families had moved into this area, some building on the west side of the river, having to come over by boats below the falls. As the settlers increased in number, a church organization came to be known as the Pres. Congregational Society and on Sunday, July 27, 1817, the first sacraments were administered. Ten members were admitted on profession of faith, bringing the membership to 24. On July 1, 1820, it was voted in church meeting ".. that this church be under the watch and care of the Presbytery of Ogdensburg..." Previous to this year, an occasional pastor came through on horseback, but services were infrequent. Sometimes they met in the home of a member; sometimes in Isaac Smith's barn, where the boys would sweep the floors, and lay boards across chunks of wood. Sometimes they met in Israel Porter's unfinished dancing hall, which was built on the spot where West Main and Hailesboro Streets now meet. There seemed to be no objection to the settlers doing the Virginia Reel in the dancing hall on

Saturday night, as long as they were mentally geared for the word of God on Sunday. The first roughly constructed school house was also used as a meeting place. A few twigs of beech or birch occupied a notable place in the schoolhouse, and during services, the sight of those birches seemed to have a quieting effect on the children. There were neighborhood prayer meetings, catechism lessons for the children, and of course, there was always community singing.

CONGREGATION

"Oh, come to the church in the wildwood,

Oh, come to the church in the vale,

No place is so dear to my childhood,

As the little brown church in the dale.

Chorus: Oh, come, come, come, come

Come to the church in the wildwood,

Come to the church in the vale,

No place is so dear to my childhood

As the little brown church in the dale."

After holding its organizational meeting, the group was most desirous of having its own meeting house, and in 1820 such a house was built, very crude, indeed. The war of 1812 had left them without necessities. Land was expensive, roads were poor, distance to markets was great. Here they were beginning a new life. Here, they really built a tabernacle in the wilderness. The seats were of slabs elevated on stool legs; the pulpit was of unplanned boards; there was no heating other than the slabs of slate footwarmers, heated in the oven at home and wrapped in burlap. A new invention, the foot stove was valuable as it could be carried. These stoves were from 8-12 inches square and 6-8 inches high. They were made of perforated tin or sheet iron, heated with domestic charcoal. In winter, these stoves were carried to church. There was no luxury in this first meetinghouse, not even a comfort, that today, we deem essential! So dedicated were these settlers, that they sat through services with numbed fingers and feet, wind whistling through the cracks in the building. They came over almost impassable roads in ox-carts, wagons loaded with women, children and hired help. They came on horseback or on foot, or they rowed in their boats across the river. Original sermons were difficult to obtain, and many was the

sermon that was repeated over and over, the idea being that the oftener they heard the same word of God, the more filled would they be with his Divine Blessing.

In those days, Saturdays were given to cooking for Sundays. Cold meats were cooked, big doughnuts fried, bread and butter prepared. They brought great baskets of food to eat when the morning service was finished; to eat after the prayer meeting in the afternoon; to eat before the service at night. There was always a generous jag of hay for the horses and oxen. The day was long, but this was their own church, built by their own efforts. It was their House of God, and, for them, filled with the Glory of the Lord.

In 1821 Rev. James Murdock became regular pastor and remained for four years. He and his wife lived on a farm on the Somerville road. He raised his own vegetables, which his wife preserved, to supplement his meager salary. He visited his parish people on horseback; worked in his garden; and in the absence of golf links and tennis courts, sawed wood to keep the home fires burning. It is interesting to note that according to records, no fallen wood was fit to be used. Only standing trees were used by the settlers for burning purposes or for building. From available records, it appeared that members subscribed a certain amount for the maintenance of the church and the salary of the minister. Dr. John Spencer was a trustee in 1822 and records show a receipt, stained with age, but legible: "Rec'd Gov'r the 7th Nov'r, 1822 of Hezekiah H. Smith by the hand of Wm. Kemp ten dollars for his assignment for the meetinghouse and for the support of Mr. Murdock. Signed, John Spencer." Evidently Mr. Smith did not "subscribe" ten dollars, or the careful Dr. Spencer would have used the word "subscription" instead of "assignment." Perhaps Hezekiah needed persuasion.

And so, in this year of 1822, the settlers were putting their fingers to the loom and their hands to the plow for six days of the week, and entering their meetinghouse on Sunday for spiritual comfort and the joy of song. If you listen, you may hear, dimly, their voices floating down out of the past, through the century, thanking God for their blessings;

LISTEN! LISTEN! LISTEN! "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord"

Narrator #2 D. Best. The year was 1867. Andrew Johnson was the seventeenth president of these United States; the Civil war was over; Alaska had just been purchased by our country; our flag held 37 stars; and our Congregational Presbyterian Society had acquired fifty years of growth. But let us go back for a time and touch some of the highlights. During the last year of Rev. Murdock's pastorate,

the church was replaced by a sturdier structure. It might be mentioned here, that records are unsure of whether Murdock Street on the west side of town, was so named in his honor, or if named for Dr. Hiram Murdock who lived in this town for fifteen years. Through negotiations with Judge Kent, agent for Gouverneur Morris estate, our present church site was deeded to the Cong. Pres. Soc. to hold forever for church purposes. It should be noted that in order to complete that transaction, a grave had to be moved, as this ground had been used as a cemetery. The building was plain, cheerless, but it was dear to the hearts of the worshippers. Records tell that it had a varied career. It was later moved to the corner of Main and William, where the Starbuck property used to be; an opera house; a paint shop of the Stephen Van Duzee M'fg Co. ; a village lock-up; a hose house; and finally a marble shop and then destroyed by fire in 1877. From 1825 to 1843, three ministers served: Rev. Richard Hand; Rev. Simeon Bicknell; Rev. John Orr.

The church continued its growth, and its problems, too. The Indians continued to be difficult. It was not infrequent for a well dressed lamb to appear at the owner's door, backed by a sober faced Indian, who offered to sell it as venison, or "wenson." I was not wise to question the identity of the meat, nor its source. These pioneers had long since learned that they must not irritate the Indians, and even though the settler might be sure that the lamb came for his own flock, he would pay the Indian, and buy his own lamb back again.

Such problems reduced revenue, and they could not afford to lose any income, since money was scarce. Very few of these settlers owned their own farms; land was too expensive. In his discourse, Rev. Conklin tells of one member who said that when he subscribed \$5.00 for the first church building and \$3.00 for the pastor, he had not paid one dollar on the farm he occupied, nor for his house, then building.

It might be mentioned here that in the early 1800s, two of the newcomers each brought a slave when they settled here. Records tell that the slaves were treated well by the towns people and by the owners. Before the civil war, the slaves were set free.

Again, during these years, dissensions had caused a rift among the Cong-Pres. group or Society. The meetings in regard to this division were many and bitter, with the result that twenty-seven members left the church and with some members from the Richville church, they formed a new Congregational Society, building their church on the site of the present Methodist church. The division resulted, partly because one group believed in loud expressions of prayer, while the minister was praying AMEN, and they also were insistent that evangelists be invited into the pulpit, these beliefs being against the wishes of the other group. In one record, the

question of Abolition was also mentioned. Listen to an excerpt from a protest by a member who opposed the division.

"We come before you brethren, claiming our fraternal rights, and protest against the organization of a second or new church for the following reasons: 1st.. Because, on general grounds, it is inexpedient and unwise to attempt to set up a Second Church of the same order in this community, there being no materials to constitute two efficient churches and congregations. 2nd.. Because of the bad moral tendency of such second organization in this community. If the proposed new church should be set in opposition to the old one, either open and avowed, or tacit and implied, the consequences cannot be but painful to every Christian heart..... What will become of Parental influence and example, when parents are divided and near relatives estranged from each other, by religious party spirit, working perpetually by means of antagonist church rivalry. What could we expect but leanness of soul in individuals; discord in families; strife and bitterness in neighborhoods..... Gouverneur, Feb. 1843." After nineteen years, they dissolved and many returned to the parent church.

Records refer to a parsonage around 1837, but show little information regarding it. During December of that year, the church bought a large lot on East Main Street, for \$500.00. It had a frontage of 166 feet running from the present Masonic Block toward Gordon Street. The lot was 600 feet deep, and, as there was no Trinity Avenue at that time, it ran almost to Howard St. The East Main part is now occupied by Grants and the Acme stores. We do not know if there was a parsonage on the place, or if a minister occupied the premises, but let our choral group tell it.

CHORAL GROUP

We've a story to relate, a tale so sad to tell,
And the outcome of it, we know not well-
'Tis said by our records of early church history,
That the Lost Parsonage is a gr-r-r-r-r-eat mystery.
'Tis known that a parsonage was there on East Main
But the facts are meager, with none to explain –
Did the Parson's family sell a house and barn, too?
Or just sell a lot with no house in view?

Who lived in that parsonage, and how long did they stay?
Whatever that story, 'tis not known today –
Three ministers served, that much is disclosed,
Lived they on East Main? It must just be supposed.
Our church was then, with debts, much harassed,
To the extent it was really financially embarrassed –
When Rev. Beckwith came, he saw no money in sight,
With no salary, he was indeed in bad plight.
To keep the wolf from the door, the church sold him some land,
From the lot on East Main, or so we understand –
As a land owner, he possessed some of Main Street,
But I'm sure you can see that he still couldn't eat.
The church fathers realized their problem----financial,
So they sold Main Street lots for money---substantial –
For research through documents, much time has been spent,
But we'll nev-v-v-v-ver know where that parsonage went.
When Mrs. Wright bought the property, we're sure she knew well,
But alas, alas, she's not here to tell –
So because church records give incomplete history,
The Lost Parsonage will remain forev-v-v-v-ver a mystery.

In the 1830s and 40s, immigrants continued to come to this town, with large families, causing new buildings and more planting of crops. (Many located on the west side of town, and while a rude bridge had been constructed, it was not considered very safe, and many still resorted to boats to bring them across below the falls. There is the story of the day when a family rowed across on their way to church, but the boat tipped over in a shallow place and dumped them all into the river. The two ladies and little girl were taken safely to shore, while the boy grabbed

the blanket containing the baby, or so he thought. However, when he reached the bank, all he had was the blanket, and the baby was found floating down with the tide. That baby lived to tell his grandchildren the story.) Many were the difficulties of the immigrants on their way here. The records tell that one day two settlers set out to help some immigrants near Somerville, as they heard that they had "broken down in the woods." They became hungry, and upon coming to an Indian hut, they stopped. The Indian, Jo, invited them in to take a ladleful of the savory soup he was cooking. The men put in a large supply, refreshing the inner man, most satisfactorily. One of them dipped a little beyond the proper depth, and fished up the entire paw of a hedgehog-----claws and all. Suddenly-----the visitors were not hungry any more, and hoping their stomachs wouldn't rebel, they went on their way. There was trade of course, between the settlers and Indians, but the pioneers decided they did not want to purchase maple syrup from them, when they found out that they strained the syrup through their Indian blankets. They also decided they preferred to kill their own deer, when they discovered that the Indians slept on their venison, to protect it from the dogs.

Edwin Dodge, agent for Mrs. Gouverneur Morris, persuaded large numbers of people to come here to settle. Great numbers of Scotch families were immigrating here, and taking farms on the Scotch Settlement Road, where they introduced a better style of farming, and more up to date dairying. The Scotch influx of immigrants led the van of arrivals during those days, after long tiresome boat trips. One Scotch family was over 16 weeks crossing the ocean. They came from their hills of heather, and the land of Robbie Burns.

(ENTER BAGPIPERS AND DANCERS)

Because of lack of money, the settlers became most adept at making tools and articles at home. They were a sort of forerunner of the present day "Do It Yourself Kit." Every cent was carefully hoarded. Mrs. George Griffith, a present church member, tells that her father, Colin Lockie, took his fleece to the woolen mills in Wegatchie to be made into cloth. He always had some of the wool dyed blue, so he could wear blue shirts to church. Shoes were made in the home, too. In those days, farmers had their hides and skins tanned "at the halves", the portion coming to them being made into footwear. It was common practice to shoe a family, by adopting the shoemaker, bench and all, into the household, and lodge and board him until every member of the family was neatly shod for the season. All damages occurring within the first three months, were to be repaired, free of cost. WOULD

THAT BE THE THRIFTY SCOTCH SPEAKING? During a church service a squeaky shoe would have a coat of grease, as an antidote, upon return home.

In 1843, when Rev. Baruch M. Beckwith became minister, it was decided to build a new meeting house, and it was finished the following year. It was 60 by 40 feet, and cost about \$3,500. Our forefathers made a distinction between their building, which was a "Meeting House", being called a "square". One entered a square lobby from which two doors opened into a square audience room, containing 24 rectangular pews, with square doors, that fastened with wooden buttons. (Near both entrances stood two square platforms on which were two square stoves, supposed to heat the room, but according to the records, the stoves did not get the idea.) The minister's haircloth sofa had a square mahogany back, and the collection plates were square boxes fastened on long wooden handles. In 1863 the church became wholly Presbyterian and the first Board of Elders was elected. Rev. Beckwith closed 23 years of effective service to our church and it's congregation and Beckwith street was named in his honor. (He built a home at about 194 East Main Street, and later it became part of the residence of Mrs. Grace Freeman.)

We return now to the year, 1867, closing fifty years of growth of our church. It is fitting, indeed, that those years be closed with the lines supposedly written by Miss Sarah Parker. They will be presented to you by the Ballad Singers.

Where, where will be the birds that sing

A hundred years to come?

The flowers that now in beauty spring

A hundred years to come?

The rosy lips, the lofty brow,

The hearts that beat so gaily now,

Oh, where will be love's beaming eye,

Joy's pleasant smile and sorrow's sigh,

A hundred years to come?

Who'll press for gold, this crowded street

A hundred years to come?

Who'll tread these ailes with eager feet,
A hundred years to come?
Pale, trembling age, and fiery youth
And childhood with its heart for truth,
The rich, the poor, on land and sea,
Where will the mighty millions be,
A hundred years to come?
(and back from the dim distance comes the answer)
We all within our graves shall sleep
A hundred years to come;
No living soul for us will weep
A hundred years to come;
BUT__other men our lands will till,
And others then, these streets will fill,
While other birds will sing as gay
And, bright the sunshine, as today,
A hundred years to come.

The year was 1917. Woodrow T. Wilson was our 28th president of these United States; our flag had 48 stars; the first American troops had landed in France; and here in Gouverneur, New York, our Presbyterian church had just passed its 100th milestone of growth. Again, let us look back for a time. The Rev. Newton J. Conklin began his ministry here in 1866. During his term, a new parsonage was built on the site of the old one. The church was enlarged by a rear extension, and the addition of twenty pews. The stoves were exchanged for a furnace; the lighting was improved; the doors of the pews were removed, and the funny little slams of the pew doors was heard no more. This pleased the children, as after that, they felt that being in church was less like being caught in a trap. All the improvements were paid for as they progressed, and when they finished, they were free from debt. Illness caused

Rev. Conklin's retirement in 1879. Rev. Tyron Edwards followed him, and he remained 6 years.

In 1887, Rev. Wm. Skinner was installed as pastor. He came here directly from Princeton Theological Seminary, and as one record stated "...he came full of ardor and enthusiasm". He preached his first sermon in the old church, June 19, 1887. Early in his pastorate, the members decided to build a new church. The old building was formally closed with a historic sermon, and the work of demolition was begun. On May 4, 1892, ground was broken for the new edifice, and, on this date (Oct. 7, 1967), our church passed its 75th year. The cornerstone of the structure was laid on the afternoon of July 27, 1892, and the young pastor swung the stone into place. The cost was approximately \$50,000 and the debt was fully paid in 1902. Mrs. Leon Reed, one of our members, tells this story about her father, Edward Mackie Hampton. He had spent seven years in his native Scotland learning the trade of cutting and building stone. He came to Gouverneur in his late 20s. This church was just being built, and he asked the contractor for work. The contractor gave him work at the rear of the church, his first in the United States. The next day, the contractor set Mr. Hampton to work at the front of the church on the belfry.

On October 3, 1893, the new church was dedicated with imposing ceremonies, and one could hear the singers chanting:

"Here shall highest praise be offered,
Here shall meekest prayer be poured,
Here, with body, soul, and spirit,
God Incarnate, be adored."

Mr. Samuel Wright and his wife occupied a farm on the Somerville Road. The land was so rocky, that they found it difficult to exist, so they sold their farm, and moved west. That farm later became the Gouverneur Marble quarry, and one hole in that farm sold for \$80,000. In her Centenary, Miss Parker hoped that "from the windows of his celestial home, Samuel Wright would look down and see the church that his farm yielded."

Our church was entering a new century; once the ox-cart, now the airplane; once the stage-coach, now the wireless; Our church was moving with the times.

On October 16, 1895, Miss Katherine Markwick and Rev. William Skinner were married. Miss Markwick believes it was the first marriage in the new church. Miss

Katherine was the daughter of Robert Markwick, a church elder. Mr. Arthur Cushman was credited for many of the decorations for their wedding. Through the years, Rev. and Mrs. Skinner were blessed with four children: George, Robert, now deceased, Sherman and Rhoda. George is now retired; Sherman is pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, Mo., Rhoda's husband, Rev. Scott Byers, is associate pastor of Park Central in Syracuse. Prior to his death, Robert was Vice President of Princeton Seminary. Probably most of you know that Sherman has two sons who are ministers: Wm. F. is pastor of Glading Memorial church in Philadelphia, Pa; Sherman, the other son, is pastor of Chili church, a suburb of Rochester, N.Y. Rhoda and her husband have a daughter, Louise, who is married to the Rev. Kenneth Plusquellec, and his pastorate is in Spencerport, N.Y. Tonight, we are honored, indeed, that several members of the Skinner families are with us in the audience. We also report with pride that a present day member of our church is preparing for the ministry. Miss Judy Hay, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bain Hay, is, at present attending Dubuque College, Iowa. She is the first lady from our church to hear the call, "Go ye into the World and preach the Gospel."

A minister's day is not without its lighter moments. Miss Helen Markwick tells of the day when Rev. Skinner performed a marriage ceremony, and when they left, the groom handed him an envelope. When Mr. Skinner opened it, he found a quarter inside. A few days later, the groom appeared at the door very embarrassed. He handed over a \$5.00 gold piece saying, "This is what I intended to give you, but I picked the wrong coin."

In 1904, Mrs. Myra Dean and her two daughters presented a gift of a new parsonage. The old building was purchased by Homer Drake and moved to John St. It is now the residence of Merrill Goodison. Mrs. Dean's husband, Mr. Orison Dean, conducted a Sunday School class in the church at one time, and this story might be of interest. Mr. Dean was associated with a sawmill business at Elmdale and drove his team there every day. One winter day, he drove his sleigh and team onto the ice of the river, but he put too much faith in the strength of the ice. Both sleigh and team went to the bottom and stayed there. When he told his wife about it, he concluded, "...but it wasn't a total loss. I saved the whip."

Rev. Wm. Skinner retired after 42 years of continuous service in our church. He was later honored as Pastor Emeritus. After his death, a baptismal font was dedicated in his memory. We cannot close this segment of church growth without touching on some stories about the Skinner boys and sister, Rhoda.

GEORGE There's wild stories they tell about us Skinner boys,

And some of the other fellers.

RHODA And how I chase after you each day,
They say we really are hellers.

ROBERT We crawl all over those horse and buggy sheds,
From ground to highest rafter,

RHODA But no matter how high you climb,
I'll follow you right after.

SHERMAN Many a day, when the snow is deep,
We drop our plans in a trice,
To go off with Harry and Dr. Mills,
He takes us fishin' through the ice.

GEORGE With so many Indians and cowboys out back,
Rafters traffic gets a bit thick,

RHODA But I'm always right behind you,
I just don't miss a trick.

ROBERT Harry always knows daring things to do,
Whether in cellar or in the rafter,
And if the plans don't go just right,
He knows how to get out of it after.

GEORGE Pumping the organ at rehearsal time,
Often spoils our plans for the day,

RHODA But I'm right there, I'll do a pinch hit,
If you'll give me a nickel for pay.

SHERMAN Sometimes we run out of stunts to do,

And whatever we played the last time,
RHODA Indians and Cowboys, we'll play again,
That's our favorite pastime.

ROBERT Somebody loosed a board in that fence,
An accident? WELL, WE DOUBT IT,
But the Whitney boys, Floyd and Jeff
Can tell you all about it.

SHERMAN That loose board is a trusted friend,
A secret ally, when needed,

RHODA YES, Many a time, if a parent calls,
Your traveling has to be speeded.

GEORGE A hidden nail often tears our clothes,
And we don't know which is greater,

RHODA The mental embarrassment, which comes first,
Or the physical embarrassment, later.

SHERMAN On a summer day, when the sun is high,
And Dodge's Grove is our pigeon,
We run from Rhoda, with no regrets.

We-e-e-ell, maybe just a smidgeon.

ROBERT And we like to move the piano about,
To rehearse, as Aunt Helen intended,

ALL And we rang the church bell, to tell the town
That World War I had ended.

NARRATOR Many's the memories these lines hold in store,

For the Skinner boys, in different ways,
And for little Rhoda, who's little no more,
Let these comments bring you back happy days.

The year is 1967. Lyndon B. Johnson is our 36th president of these United States; our flag boasts fifty stars; and the Presbyterian Church in Gouverneur, New York, commemorates one hundred fifty years of progress. Again, let us retrace our steps, for some of those years, and sort of catch our breath, as it were. Time and space have passed with unbelievable speed. Standards of living have changed to produce a world unthought of by our forefathers.

In 1930, Rev. Joseph A. Schofield, Jr., accepted a call to our pulpit, and shortly after this, Miss Mary Lewis of Delhi, and Rev. Joseph Schofield were married. They occupied the new parsonage, and two sons were born to them, Lewis and Lemuel. We remember, indeed, these boys, and watched them grow. This we believe, is a golden nugget of a story about them. One day the boys got two cigars, and smoked them somewhere behind the church. Little Lemuel was sick. The parents thought that was the end of it, but that summer, they found two cigar stubs, and proceeded to test them. Again Lemuel was sick. When that session was over, little seven year old Lemmie looked up at his father, and cried, "Oh, father, I've got the habit."

Rev. Schofield was a writer of special ability, both of juvenile and adult religious works. He had several books of children's sermons published, copies of which are not in our Gouverneur Library. Children, children's sermons, children's music were closely identified with our church during those years. Listen to our children's choir. (Cherub vested choir.)

During Mr. Schofield's pastorate, much repair work was accomplished, using the large sum left from the funds of the Dean sisters. The basement was completely renovated; dining room enlarged to accommodate at least 500; new heating system; complete kitchen; new nursery. Dorcas Soc financed new velvet cushions for pews; new carpet was a gift of Mrs. Dean. We wish to mention the valuable services of Ella Woodworth, who for many years was our very efficient Flower Fund chairman.

There have been innumerable memorials presented to the church over the years; New chapel, given by Mrs. George Leak; electric organ for the chapel, given by Mrs. George Beaman, both in memory of their husbands. In 1920, a new pipe organ was given anonymously. In 1934, after the death of Miss Jennie Dean, it was disclosed by the committee, James O. Sheldon, Charles M. Tait, and Dr. W. R. Connor, that

Miss Dean was the donor, and a suitable plaque was placed on the organ. The ceiling lights of the sanctuary were given in memory of John and Iantha Laidlaw, by their sons, Arthur, Andrew and Earle. The communion table was a memorial given by Mrs. Guy Baker, in memory of her husband. It is our regret that because of lack of time, all memorials cannot be named. In 1943 the church was equipped with a tower amplifying system given in memory of those who have been a part of World War II.

On May 24, 1942, Rev. Schofield's service included the unveiling of the marble Memorial Tablet to the First Ruling Elders of the Church who were ordained May 18, 1863. This was one of the services that week commemorating the one hundred twenty fifth anniversary of the founding of our church. Miss Sarah Parker, in her Centenary booklet, gives a graphic account of those elders, as she remembered them. (2 chairs for Sarah and little Sarah) (Enter Sarah Parker, and little Sarah Parker) (Boys place 7 chairs)

Sarah: How do you do, little Sarah Parker.

Little Sarah: How do YOU do, Miss grown up Sarah Parker.

Sarah: How well I remember you, little Sarah. My parents began taking me to church, when I was very young. First, I was a baptized child of the church, and they probably thought it their duty to train the child in the church going habit. Again, this was the 1843 church, and the pews, there were 24 of them, had square doors, fastened with wooden buttons. So they reasoned that when the child was securely buttoned in the pew, she was safe from mischief.

Little Sarah: I just love to go to church, but not to worship the Lord. I like to go so I can wear my red velvet hat, trimmed with cherries, that rattle beautifully. I can't see the hat when it is on my head, but I KNOW it's there. I can hear the cherries rattle. I just love the music, too, and I love to watch the boy pump the organ. I like to see his steady, even strokes of the pump handle.

Sarah: I used to wonder about the people in church.

Little Sarah: I also love to watch the people, and I have my own idea about why they come to church. I wonder if they talk about my hat when they go home.

(Enter 7 men and be seated before Sarah speaks)

Sarah: I remember those seven men as they sat on the platform on Communion Sundays, just below the pulpit. First came George Rodger, probably the oldest

member of the Board. Next came Joseph Howes, who wore a funny little smile. Melville Thrall followed with a shock of black hair, that looked like a wig, but I guess it was natural. Next came Samuel Wright, whose face was framed in red hair and a red beard. Next was George Lockie, who was always associated with generous hospitality. Next came Dr. Simeon Parmelee. He was more identified with the sick room than with the ruling elders. When he felt your pulse and looked at your tongue, you could see a little twinkle in his eye, if he asked you how many green apples you had eaten. Last came James Brodie, a grand old Scot, and a perfect tailor.

Little Sarah: I like it when the children sing on Sunday.

(Music) (Vested Junior Choir)

Rev. Schofield accepted a call to a church in Montgomery, New York, and he preached his final sermon on September 27, 1953, after twenty three years of continuous service to our church and its people. After his death, a silver communion service was dedicated in his memory.

Rev. Merritt Updyke became our next pastor, preaching his first sermon on Jan. 10, 1954. He came with his wife and two daughters, Dorinda, and Thelma Jane from Scarsdale, N.Y. During those years, the parking lot was black-topped; Mr. Rouse gave financial aid to repair the chimes; vast repairs were made on the organ, during a period of several weeks. During this time, our organist, inserted and shifted tongue depressors on the non-functioning music stops. Our choir director, and our choir also gave valiant service in the face of tremendous difficulties. Mr. Updyke initiated the Youth Center during his term of service, and he offered delightful addresses to the children before each morning sermon. During these years the Couples Club was organized. During the Sesqui- Centennial of 1955, about 550 High School Alumni, and church members gathered here for a Dorcas dinner. Who can forget that night, when a terrific thunder storm ensued, and the lights went out. Instead of going to the High School Alumni dance, everyone sat and visited here with his neighbor, without the benefit of Mr. Thomas Edison's usual courtesy.

During this year, a church office was established, with Mrs. George Beaman as secretary. In 1958 the Women's societies were reorganized, as UPWA. Chairs and dining tables were purchased; a much needed choir robe closet was arranged.

After seven years of service here, Rev. Updyke accepted a call as associate pastor in Wichita, Kansas.

The following year, 1962, Rev. Frank Hoffman came to our church as pastor, with his wife and daughter, Christine. A son, Paul, was born to them during his ministry here. His accomplishments are so recent, that it suffices to mention a few highlights. We recall as though it were yesterday, his interest in the Clericus; his promotion of Youth program; his Planned Parenthood project; Dial a Prayer. This was a one minute prayer by telephone, using a special number, the prayer being changed every twenty four hours. Mr. Hoffman also planned Sunday sermon broadcasts, these being financed by church members and other friends. The Sunday School program was completely reorganized, as was the Session, with committee duties. The Session and the Deacons deserve much appreciation from church members for the commendable manner in which they direct finances and spiritual welfare of the church body.

In this year of 1967, Rev. Hoffman resigned after five years of service, to accept a call as pastor in Hartford, Conn.

Earlier, our narrator spoke of our church moving with the times. Let us note some of the changes from former days to the present.

(Enter M. C. and 3 missionary society ladies and 2 missionary society men.)

M. C. How do you do! You are a most interesting group. Would you identify yourselves?

Lady K Miss. We represent the first women's societies in the church. I am Mrs. Samuel Wright, of the Ladies' Missionary Society of 1871. This is a member of the Helping Hand Society of 1872. These gentlemen are from the Young Men's Missionary Society of 1875 and this lady is from the Young Ladies' Industrial Society of 1875. May we ask who you are?

M. C. Indeed, yes. I am the Master of Ceremonies, better known as M. C. You are about to take part in a radio broadcast.

Lady M Radio? Broadcast? Do you know what he's talking about?

Lady M No, I DON'T! What is he talking to that stick for?

M. C. This ia an invention from your future. If you speak into this stick, your voice will go out over the air waves, just as our sermons are broadcast on Sundays. Would you tell us about your work?

Lady M We support a Bible reader doing mission work in Syria.

Lady M We conduct three weekly prayer meetings in church. Rev. Conklin thought this was a long felt need. On different nights, we prayed for Home and Foreign Missions; for Mothers of the Church; for unconverted friends; and for husbands and young men of the town.

Lady M We supported a scholar in Africa----at considerable expense!

M. C. Gentlemen? What about you?

1st Man We were responsible for contributions to the Boards for supplies for foreign missions.

2nd Man We also cared for the needy and the poor.

1st Lady I wonder how the societies of the future will handle their affairs.

(Enter present day society members)

M. C. Well, maybe the future can tell you. Ladies and gentlemen, this is Norton Taylor, of our present day Men's Brotherhood. Norton, would you tell us of your plans.

Norton Yes. I am glad to say that OUR generation looks from the church into the community to do most of its work. But, let's face it. We don't do enough.

Man M That doesn't tell us much.

Nort As a group, we support the Boy Scouts, leading boys to become better citizens through activities like camping.

Man M WELL! In our day, our boys got all the "camping" they needed.

Nort True! But each generation has to do things differently. We are also helping to pay for an airplane for missionary work in Idaho.

Lady M Plane? What does he mean?

M. C. I'm sure you would like to compare notes, but our broadcast time is limited. I'm sorry.

Man M Well! Our men's missionary society of early days has certainly changed through the years. May I speak of your style of clothing?

M. C. Jim, do tell us about it.

Jim Yes, this is my new sport coat, shirt and loafers.

Man M Loafers??? Tch, tch, tch! Where are your spats?

Nort SPATS!!!

M. C. And here is Mrs. VanSlyke and Mrs. Kraker. Ann, tell us about your work.

Ann We represent the United Presbyterian Women's Association of our present day church.

Lady M OH! LOOK AT THE LENGTH OF HER SKIRT!!!

Ann Oh, do you like my SHIFT?

Lady M OH, NO!!! A shift, in our day was an undershirt. We wouldn't think of wearing a SHIFT on the outside.

Lady M A SHIFT??? ON THE OUTSIDE???

Ann Now, let me see. You mentioned four organizations for women and men. I'm sure there were other later ones. I am glad to say that we are united into one group. We give money for our mission boards to carry on Christ's work here at home, and throughout the whole world. We do lack something, however, something which you seemed to have----an intense awareness of neighbor and his needs.

M. C. In our day we had few extras. We sacrificed.

Ann We don't sacrifice, really, as far as food, clothing, or warm homes are concerned, but our stand, those who know God, HAS TO BE TO SERVE THE WORLD. And, we don't do it. We are afraid!

Man M But you HAVE to accept your new urban, scientific society – Not our rural, simple, past ways.

Ann You're right, of course. It is God's way with men, that life is not shaped, as we would have it, but as creation demands it. We have seen tonight that some of us are risk takers, prophets. Some of us have already – or WILL make a difference in our world.

Lady M This is, indeed, strange. It is almost as if we didn't want God to be truly God,

Lady M ... but rather some sort of static deity, always to be known in familiar ways.

Lady M But the familiar ways are best. Consider the SABBATH SCHOOL.

Lady M On Sunday morning, and Sunday afternoon, and during the hours of catechism, our children learned well.

Dor K You should know that Christian Education happens at many times and places, also.

Lady M But the teachings are the SAME!

Dor. Basically, yes, but the church has to study and UNDERSTAND God's plans, and the way we may serve the world today.

Lady M The world certainly has changed. (pointing to mike).

Dor. Even now, our Board of Christian Education is undertaking a still newer venture to replace our present program. We teach because of our Faith, and in this SO CHANGED world, we HAVE TO change teaching to better understanding, so we can participate constructively.

M. C. Ladies and gentlemen! I'm very happy to have been your M. C. in this instructive program tonight. I'm sorry that our broadcast is nearing its time limit. Thank you for coming. Good night.

Narrator: We cannot close our program without a coverage of the musical support of our church. Countless people have been associated with our choir through the years, some of whom are in the audience tonight. Music, the universal language, has always held a prominent place in church growth. During the very earliest days of settlement, music consisted of singing only, as an organ or violin was considered an instrument of the Devil. Such beliefs passed, however, and in the late 1800s, records speak of bass viol and violin accompanying the choir. Many times choir members changed voices, if someone was away, but the same can be said of our own Dorothy Best today.

There have been various choir directors and organists. In the church catalogue of 1894 the following is listed:

Chorister: Professor James M Marsh

Organist: Miss Kate McCloy

Sexton: William H. West

Mr. F.W. Sudds not only directed, but he composed secular as well as religious music. (Music) (Trust Her Not) Mrs. Lillian Tait Sheldon served as organist for many

years. She began playing the organ when she was just a little girl. She was a composer of note, and many of her compositions have been used by our present day choir. Our church offered a memorial service for Mrs. Sheldon in March 15, 1925, using her religious works. Many will remember Charles M. Tait, better known as "Charlie." He pumped the organ for Mrs. Sheldon as a boy. Later, he sang, composed, directed the choir, and became organist, when Mrs. Sheldon retired in 1923. It is interesting to note that in the treasurer's annual report in 1903, under choir expenses is listed, "Pumping" \$25.64. Mrs. Ora Spencer Fuller then became organist and continued in that capacity for twenty five years.

Present members tell of the time that Mrs. Fuller heard of a soldier in Pine Camp, who liked to play the organ. She invited him to play the Postlude. He accepted, he sat down and played, "Roll out the Barrel." It is not stated whether he was asked to return. After the death of Mrs. Fuller, a memorial service was offered on February 26, 1967 presenting her favorite music.

Mrs. William Foster is our present organist, giving of her time, her talents, and her interest. We are sure she would agree that her musical family of today, is a far cry from the days when the Skinner boys, Earle Laidlaw and Charles Tait pumped the organ. Junior and Cherub choirs are also a part of our musical church life today. Mrs. Charles Johnson is our present choir director. Mrs. Bette Farley, a former director of our choir, is guest conductor this evening.

Many musical names could be brought to mind as choir members, such as Bessie Lee Green, Kate Callahan, Dr. W.R. Conner. Morris Davies joined the choir in 1909, and is still a member.

And so, we return to this year of 1967, having touched on the highlights of our past, having covered one hundred fifty years of growth of our Presbyterian Church, here in Gouverneur, New York, and our choir will close our program.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Chairman: Mrs. Nyles Crowner

Mrs. Eugene DeNagel

Mrs. Wallace Thompson