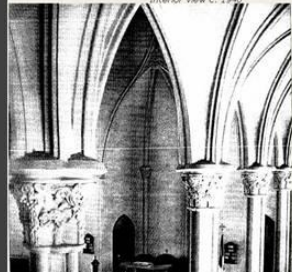


ASBURY IN THE COLONIES

According to his journal, Asbury finally preached in current day Westchester County at New Rochelle on December 10th 1771. Passing through Rye, it

About



History | Church Enters Twentieth Century

Mamaroneck United Methodist Church – An Historical Overview

The Church enters the 20th Century

(1909 - 1960)

The Previous Celebration

In **1909**, the church celebrated the Semi-Centennial of the present edifice of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A week long celebration occurred. The Executive Committee included **Frederick Bellows**, **Burton C. Meighan**, **Reuben G. Brewer**, **Bradford Rhodes**, and **Rev. Burdette B. Brown**. Monday, December 13th was "Sunday School Night" which included "exercises by members of the school" and addresses by **Rev. Dr. James E. Holmes** and **Rev. Dr. Elbert C. Hoag**. Tuesday, December 14th was "Pastor's Night"; Wednesday, "Prayer Meeting Night" with a sermon by **Rev F. B. Upham** from Brooklyn; Thursday was "Music Night"; Friday was "History and Anecdote Night" with **Mr. Burton C. Meighan**, presiding. Sunday December 19th had a sermon by **Rev. Thomas Nicholson**, Secretary of the Board of Education of New York City and the evening service had **Rev. William Arnold Shanklin**, President of Wesleyan University preaching.

*Burdette B. Brown
Pastor 1909-1913*

The **Rev. Burdette B. Brown** was pastor here for the 1913 Centennial of the church celebrating 100 years since incorporation. A booklet of that was the basis for many of these words, based on the writings of Mr. Charles Holden who wrote the Historical Remembrance. Reverend Brown writes in the forward of that book:

"Somewhere between the past which we may know and the future which we cannot know is a realm teeming with living activity which we call the present-



--partly known and partly unknown...As the Mamaroneck Church enters the second century of her history may she also enter into a broadening influence for good...faith, hope, charitable love, sacrifices, benevolence, ministries will abound in the developing church. A few score loyal, devout, soul-visioned workers are of more value than many hundreds without such qualities."

The Pastor was paid \$1,900 and the Organist \$275 for the year. This year celebrated the addition of a new organ for \$3,100 and the toilets in the basement of the parlors were added for the cost of \$1,500. The Ladies Aid society contributed \$1,200 to the Trustees for this special fund and a **Mr. Andrew Carnegie** contributed \$1,400 toward the purchase of this new organ.

The Music committee (1913-1915) l-r

A.C. Delanoy; Mildred Thomas, organist, Chas. R. Ross, Pastor; Alma Harriot; Mrs. B.C. Meighan; R.P. Brewer

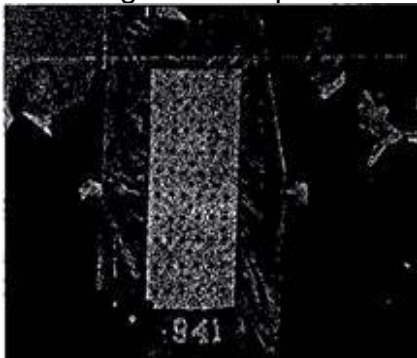
The 1913 Organ Committee:

(1st row, l-r) Elisha H. Gedney; Robert C. Gedney; (2nd row, l-r) R. P. Brewer, Alfred C. Delanoy



The World Wars

The advent of World War I saw service by many in the community. A Service flag was purchased by the official board to hang in the church. When a young person from the congregation in Mamaroneck went off to fight in the war a star was added to the flag. When a person "made the supreme sacrifice in the service of our country"



*Service Flag from
WW II*

a gold star was added to the flag.

There were 37 stars on the flag from WWI. **Colonel Fred T. Wilson**, a member of this church who led troops in both WWI and WWII was called upon to assist in retiring the

service flags of both WWI and WWII in 1947. He presented them to **Burt C. Meighan Jr.** who also served in WWI, to be placed in the Church Archives. **David Potts Jr.**, was remembered by a Gold Star from World War I. The WWII Service flag had 126 stars, two of which were Gold in memory of **Clarence Bull** and **Edward Miller** who gave their lives during WWII.

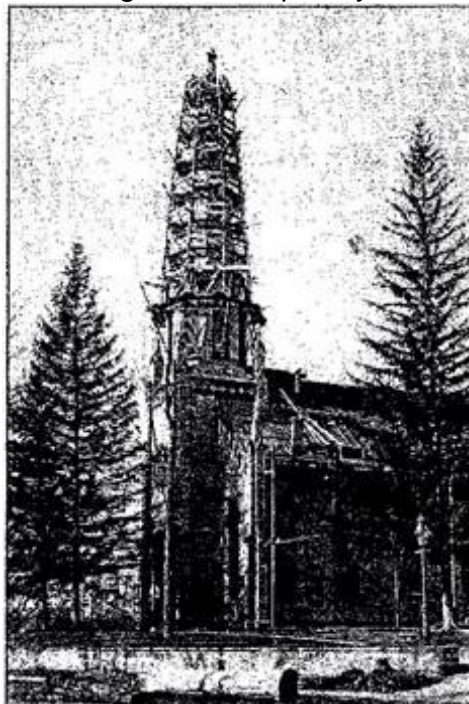
Another concern in the late teens was the issue of prohibition. At a special meeting of the official board on **May 25, 1919**, based on the issues addressed by the District Superintendent and the Anti-Saloon League, it was moved and passed that the Pastor "send a telegram to our Senators and representatives in Congress expressing the attitude of this church as regards prohibition." No opinion is expressed, but one would assume it was within the Methodist doctrine and principles to favor prohibition

The 1920's & 30's

From the Mamaroneck Paragraph we learn that during a thunder and lightning storm in early **August of 1942**, the steeple of the church was struck by lightning and caught fire. All five companies of the Mamaroneck Volunteer fire Department responded.

Damage was slight because of the prompt action of firemen. Somehow, a portion of the steeple was damaged and also a portion of the pulpit. An insurance claim of \$750 was received and **Mr. Brewer** arranged for temporary coverings to the holes in the roof. Repairs would amount to \$658 without the repairs of the lighting system.

The **1930's** began with the depression in full swing. However, right before the depression the Samuel Johnson house had been purchased. This property, which bordered the west side of the church, allowed space for the future building of the Education complex. The Johnson house was used for Sunday School class rooms and offices at first. It was financed in a unique way. Members of the



*1895 - The steeple shingled (pictured)
1924 - struck by lightning
1993 - lightning protection installed*

church purchased bonds and then the church took out insurance policies on the members. The purchase was completed in **1928** before the stock market fall. It was in **1941** that the pastor decided to switch from the church house to the present parsonage.

In **1935** a grand refinancing project was undertaken in the same way as the Johnson House was financed. Members loaned the church \$500 each and an insurance policy was purchased. Members were to be repaid in 20 years.

The Junior Choir

In of **1942**, the Choir sang for the first time. There were thirty-five members under the direction of **Mrs. Clara Brooks**. The choir grew and grew.

Junior Choir at Christmas, circa 1950's.

It was estimated that there were over 600 members over the life of the choir.

Margaret F. Donaldson assumed the leadership of the choir in **1944**. Her untiring dedication brought much success and great reputation to this choir of 100 children during its glorious days. They



appeared on national television at least three times. They were on the radio a number of times also. Many of that generation still talk of the great enthusiasm and love of Peggy in their choir lives. Peggy wrote in the fifteenth anniversary booklet:

"It has been pointed out that for musical purposes and in the interest of good discipline, the choir is too large. There have been suggestions that membership be limited only to children with superior voices who would make a full contribution to the tone and volume. The director might at one time have agreed with this but now and then something happens to the spirit of a child which seem to justify our flexible entrance requirements. A mother telephoned one day weeping with gratitude. Her son had never been able to for a place on a team or in any musical group in school. She said 'You accepted him, so now he belongs to something and his whole attitude toward life has changed.' One morning last Spring, we were in the middle of an anthem, about the sheep and lambs going safely home while Jesus, the Lamb of God, was taken to a hill to be crucified. I looked up from the piano into a face of a little girl whose eyes were filled with tears of compassion."

The memories of the Junior Choir and Margaret Donaldson will never fade from the history of the church.

Wartime Correspondence

During WWII, a **Miss Elizabeth Moore** faithfully wrote all the service men and women of this congregation. According to her own journal over 130 members of this church who served in the armed forces. The service men and women faithfully replied to her letters and bulletins from home. Many postcards and letters remain. If only we had the pages to print them all!

James A. Jackson wrote on one note "Just a card to let you know that I'm fine in every way and that the Army and I still seem to agree. The people in St. Louis and USO's are grand to all of us."

A letter from **Sgt. Howard Barker** said, "Thank you for the lovely picture of our church. I have that picture placed against the wall in front of me now for it brings back such fond memories. Am certainly glad to know that you and the members had it painted although I know I'd like it just as much even if it hadn't been painted."

Florence Boak wrote from Naval Training School: "I just want to thank you for sending these and tell you how much closer they bring me to home. It is a wonderful feeling to read about all the people I knew as a civilian and find out what they are doing."

George Langerfeld wrote in 1945 from Saipan, M.I.: "You can bet your boots that I'll be there back in our regular pew starting with the first Sunday I'm home, and from there on out. I don't know just why, but that little church of ours sure makes me homesick. We have chapel service here and I go every Sunday...but we sing those old familiar hymns (sic.), it sure brings me right back home there. About the biggest thing missing in our services out here is the presents (sic.) of women. Every once in a while we have a Red Cross girl or nurse sing a solo. It sure will be nice to get back home and hear our choir sing again."

The Growing Years

The end of the war brought a renewal and revival to the church. Many returning veterans felt as **George Langerfeld** that church was a good place to be. All of the Protestant denominations experienced tremendous growth during the post-war boom.



Dr. Edgar Jackson, Pastor (1951-1961) has his tie adjusted by Frances Larmon, founder and editor of "The Messen

ger"

as they prepare to mark the centennial celebration of this 1859 church building.

major renovation of the sanctuary.



A pre-nursery group in the livingroom of the parsonage. Teacher, Mrs. Frank S. Rathbone, Jr. (right), Assistants Mrs. Sam Davis (Left) and Mrs. George Langerfeld (center). This photo was used in the promotion of the education building.

The 1950's in the Mamaroneck Church is associated with the name **Dr. Edgar Jackson**, who served this congregation for 14 years. The church grew by leaps and bounds during the Jackson era. It was during this time that the building of the Educational Wing took place as well as a major renovation of the sanctuary.

When **Dr. Jackson** retired, official board adopted the following resolution:

"His reputation as a preacher, a counselor, a lecturer at Pastor's schools, as the writer of many widely read books, has brought honor not only to our church but entire Methodist church. But his nationwide reputation means less to us than the personal relationship we have had with him. Only he and God know of the accumulation of hours spent with us individually – in his office and in our homes – giving us insights

into our own natures, marshalling our resources for solving our problems, enlarging our concepts of religion and the nature of God, teaching that unless life is a spiritual experience, it is meaningless. His sermons have extended the horizons of our minds. He has brought us truth about the spiritual nature of man that most of us could not have discovered for ourselves. Our sorrow to lose him will be shared by the entire community which holds him in high esteem not only because of his professional reputation but also because he has consistently stood for the worth of every human being in the sight of God and for the freedom to every one to express his beliefs and opinions."

*At the age of 29, I arrived in the winter of 1961 as the Associate Minister to work with **Dr. Edgar Jackson, Sr.** Those five years were truly the high point of my ministry. The spiritual life of this church was something special then. Dr. Jackson, with his discussion and prayer group cells, had established a unique ministry for those who participated in it. Every Wednesday morning, there was an early morning service with the "laying on of hands." Spiritual energy flowed. Two youth groups were formed. Their meetings on Sunday evenings attracted 50 to 75 young people. There were retreats at Shelter Island, Easter sunrise services, joint meeting with Jewish youth and a special tie with a black church in Queens. The voices that were in the choir became the nucleus of a spiritual folk singing phenomenon! We opened a coffeehouse in the church house basement; hundreds of teenagers came. I ministered, and I was ministered to. I taught, and I learned. I counseled, and I was counseled, I prayed for, and I was prayed for. The awareness of the presence of the Spirit was so strong!*

---Richard E. Stout

The Women of the Church

No more can be written without attention to the women of the church and their special role. Until the late 20th century, it was indeed a male dominated world. **Betsey Barney** became the first woman elected to the trustees in **1971**. **Christine McCabe**, the current president of the Trustees, is the first woman to serve in this position. In the "olde days" of course, the men were the honorary leaders, but as we still know today in most churches, the women raise the money and do God's special work in a variety of ways. The meeting of incorporation of the church took place in the house of Hester Sands, a widow. It was probably the women who were most anxious to have a church built for their Methodist Society, so they convinced the men to meet. Throughout the minutes of the Trustees from as far back as we have them recorded, major financial decisions were made only after the commitment of the women's organization to the cause of purpose.

The Ladies Aid Society was organized in **1886** during the pastorate of Joseph Pullman. This was the predecessor organization to the Women's Society for Christian Service, and the current United Methodist Women. In the **1913** Yearbook it is said,

"The Society has made continuous contribution to the social and financial welfare of the Church. Its affairs have been conducted in a dignified manner and in a spirit of loyalty and devotion."

The treasurer's statements show 'constant payment towards work at the parsonage, the cleaning of carpets, the repairing and reaseating of chairs, and reception expenses. Funds were raised from fairs, sewing society, strawberry festivals, and dues and fines.



May, Gladys LaRoza ready Sunday School Julia LaRoza now 102.

The Ladies Aid held its first evening of stereopticon entertainment in September **1886**, charging forty cents admission from which \$85.50 was raised. Their first purchase was a set of china, which, as one president wrote in an annual report in the **1920's**, was a "prophetic decision since our chief revenue would be in the culinary line." In the original constitution the Society's "special province belongs to devise plans for, and to superintend all entertainments held for the purpose of aiding the church socially and financially."



Mrs. A.G. Stromberg, President of the W.S.C.S. hosts the 85th birthday celebration of Ada E. Boyd, Elizabeth C. Rich, and Lelia Smith at the Parsonage, February 26, 1945.

In September of 1909, the Girl's Club was formed for girls 12 and older.

Their purpose was one of "socialbility and charity." In **1913**, the Fortnightly Club was formed, which evolved into the Wesleyan Service Guild in **1940**. Their meetings were held at night so this group was primarily for working women. The Young

Mothers group was formed in **1948** to "discuss the problems of our children and have speakers specifically the subject of children." The Women's Society for Christian Service and the subsequent United Methodist Women, formed in **1973**, are that no matter the name of the organization, the women have been the backbone of in the church.

These "ladies" organizations, by whatever name may wish to refer to them, have supported Missions through their district pledges and have done much in many ways to support the local church. The United Methodist Women gave \$6,500 towards the restoration fund. From the Ladies Aid in 1896 and their commitment to a new parsonage to the UMW of today who recently endowed a parsonage upkeep fund, the women of the church have had an ongoing interest in maintaining a beautiful parsonage.