

The Fort Miller Reformed Church: Its History and Mission & The Community



c. 1890



2011

Dedication

We dedicate this church history update to the 13 men who organized our church in 1822, the 34 pastors who have served here and to the church members and residents of Fort Miller and the surrounding area who have kept the church open and vital for the last 189 years. Your dedication, stewardship and love of God have given us this church today. To the over 7 generations who have maintained and strengthened our church, we thank you.

Also, we dedicate this update to our current pastor and his wife, the Reverend Charles and Debbie Bailey, for their 39+ years of love and service to our church and community. Thanks to your continuing efforts we have a rich tradition of vibrant Sunday worship services, vital Sunday School and youth programs, a strong outreach to seniors, missionaries in various fields and to those in the community needing support. You have urged that we give priority to maintaining the church and its properties and we have done this. And, most importantly, you have always been there for us, celebrating with us during the good times and supporting us when we needed a friendly ear and to be reminded of God's love. We thank you.

Lastly, we dedicate this update to the current generation of church members and community residents with the challenge to continue to support the church – continue to worship on Sunday, continue to send your children to Sunday School and youth programs, continue to support our seniors and missions and continue to attend our suppers, other fund raisers and programs. Invite others to worship with us. Our challenge is to hand off a stronger church to the next generation.

The Fort Miller Reformed Church Consistory
November, 2011

Members

Elders

Tina de Jong
William McCulley
Malcolm Sanders
Mark Sheffer

Deacons

Mark Anderson
Paul Flanders
Janice Peterson
Mary Louise Gaylord Squires

Foreword

The Fort Miller Reformed Church has been an institution in the community for almost 200 years. The sanctuary was constructed in 1816 and used as a meetinghouse until 1822 when a Reformed Protestant Dutch Church congregation was organized. The hamlet of Fort Miller began to grow at this time around the operation of a sawmill and a gristmill on the Hudson River and, later, with the opening of the original Champlain Canal in 1822 and a paper mill in 1855. A post office, grocery stores, blacksmith shops, hotels and schools also opened to meet the needs of an increasing population. The church grew during the first half of the 19th century with this economic development of the area, however in the early 1850s the congregation fractured over the issue of building a new dam on the Hudson River at Fort Miller and the church closed in 1853. (Note: The church reopened in 1867.) In the late 19th century, the church expanded its mission to start new religious groups and host new civic and fraternal organizations in the community. The church and community honored those serving in World War I. For its 100th anniversary in 1922, church members organized a three-day celebration highlighting the history of the area and the church. Members came together to support the church and each other in the “Great Depression” of the 1930s. During World War II, church members gathered again to honor those serving in the armed forces. In the decades after World War II, the church experienced the same economic and demographic shifts as other rural churches in upstate New York. But the church has kept its doors open and continued to be vital over the last 6+ decades, serving its members and the community, and remains as the final link to the other public institutions that existed in the hamlet over the past 189 years.

In 1971, the Reverend Millard Gifford, the pastor of the Fort Miller Reformed Church at that time, compiled the history of the church and published this work as The Phoenix of the North. (This title referred to the rebirth and reopening of the church after the Civil War.) Reverend Gifford researched the biography for each pastor serving at the church and compiled the history of church-related events occurring during each of these pastorates. The Phoenix has not been updated since its publication.

The Fort Miller Reformed Church will celebrate its bicentennial in 2022. The church’s consistory, its governing group of lay leaders, has decided to (1) update The Phoenix now to include the last 40 years of church history, the pastorate of our current minister, the Reverend Charles Bailey, (2) bring-in new items of historical interest, those not published in The Phoenix, (3) show how the church has been an important and continuing institution in the community for the last 189 years and (4) do this update electronically so that further updates, such as the one for the bicentennial in 2022, can be done easily and published in new books and on the church’s Web site at (www.churches.rca.org/fortmiller).

Our goals for this church history update are to :

Part 1 - Republish The Phoenix of the North with the update covering 1972 – June, 2011.

Part 2 - Provide new items of historical interest (not published in The Phoenix), dealing with the area around Fort Miller, the community and church life.

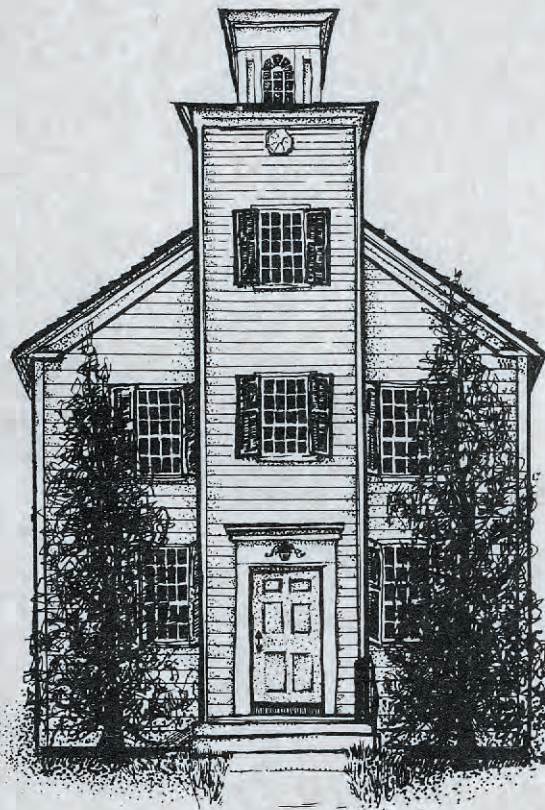
Part 3 - Lay out a vision/mission statement for the church committing to maintain it as an important and relevant part of Fort Miller community life.

Members of the Consistory

Part 1 –
Republishing The Phoenix of the North
including the update covering
1972 – June, 2011
written by our current pastor, the Reverend Charles Bailey

2.00

The
PHOENIX *of the* NORTH



Fort Miller Reformed Church

The PHOENIX of the North
Ministers and Supply Pastors

Who Served The Fort Miller Reformed Church
Fort Edward. NY.
1817 To 1972

By: Rev. Millard M. Gifford
Layout And Editing: Charlotte C. Gifford
Artwork: Ruth Lapitsky
Printing: Kwik Kopy. New York

1971

DEDICATION.

To the ministers and stated supplies who have served the Fort Miller Reformed Church, conscripts of God, followers of Jesus, lured by the music of faith and love for the brethren, men of prayer, workers, witnesses, I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

To the members of the church and adherents who have worshipped much, prayed often, worked gladly and given generously for the support of their church, I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

To those whose hearts and homes have been sanctuaries, whose hospitality has kindled abiding affection, I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

To the consistory men, my co-workers and friends, who authorized the work on this project and who are typical of the men who have served this church, I DEDICATE THIS BOOK.

1971

ELDERS

Russell Center
Ralph Humiston
Richard Kidwell
Albert Wachter

DEACONS

Harold Hunter
James Petit
Allan Rice
George Welch

Millard M. Gifford Pastor

FOREWORD.

When, in 1968, Mrs. Gifford and I saw the Fort Miller Reformed Church, it was a case of love at first sight. The spacious grounds, the splendid parking facilities, the unaffected simplicity of its architectural lines, the beauty of the sanctuary created by the genuine craftsmanship of Shepherd Norcross, James Petit, Henry DeGroot, Bernhard Pett, Frank Taylor, Frank Germain, Harold Hunter, and others, made it for us 'The Jewel Of The North'. And that it will always remain.

So, when Elder Albert Wachter, whose enthusiasm and faith are a tonic and whose love for our church is an inspiration, asked whether I would prepare a brochure, bringing together the truly fascinating history of our church, I gladly accepted. It seemed to me then, and still does, to be the only way to let the world know of the struggle which has been Fort Miller's attempt to witness for Christ.

For a struggle it has been, and a battle it still is. Just to survive for 150 years has been a monumental task. But more was done. Ecumenical souls labored here, striving to unite various types of Christians. Some ministers rode arduous miles on horseback, from Buskirk to Argyle to Fort Miller. Others died by tragic accident in the prime of life, leaving lonely hearts behind them. Some were wraithlike. They appeared and vanished almost without a trace. Even their date of death sometimes was not recorded. Some men came here with dreams sparkling in their eyes. Some were old, and it showed.

One said his strength was insufficient for the rigors of this climate. A few were in a great hurry, scarcely able to settle, so attractive were greener pastures elsewhere. Some were dynamic leaders and left behind a goodly legacy in a short time. Others were authentic saints who, by their interest in young men, helped shape the intellectual life of America. Here consistories hammered out their resolutions, shared their considerable talents and pooled their labors. On this spot they sweated to raise funds. Sometimes they succeeded. But always love of Christ and their church sustained them and made them carry on.

We were objects of missionary concern for a considerable period. Unable, or unwilling, to pay the entire salary of our pastors, we were yoked at various times with Old Saratoga (Schuylerville Reformed Church), Northumberland (Bacon Hill Reformed Church). Pastors from Hudson Falls and North Argyle helped, as have friends from Easton, Union Village (Greenwich) Schaghticoke, and Buskirk. Various wars and their thought currents have swirled about our church. The Civil War caused much divisiveness. But the thing that broke our corporate life, was a bitter, vicious, prolonged quarrel, occasioned by the State of New York placing a high dam in the Hudson River, near the present Cottrell plant.

As you read this book, ask God's forgiveness for the bitterness that divides individuals and nations. But say a prayer of thanksgiving, too, for all those who worked here, who, by their tensions and frustrations, ordeals and labors, sacrifices and faith, served our church, until angry passions caused its death and then, by the use of common horse sense, the power of the Holy Spirit, and a living faith, breathed Resurrection Life into it, making it THE PHOENIX OF THE NORTH. And pray, too, that the eternal God may continue to raise up men and women who will love Christ, His Church and their neighbors, until they are called home.

MINISTERS AND SUPPLY PASTORS
who, for one year and more, served the
FORT MILLER REFORMED CHURCH

Isaiah Younglove Johnson	1817-1821	Argyle, Fort Miller
Philip Duryee	1822	Old Saratoga Northumberland organized Fort Miller
Isaac Van Hook	1823-1824	Buskirk, Argyle
Various Supply Pastors	1825-1826	Fort Miller, Wilton
John McKelvey	1827	Argyle, Fort Miller, Wilton
Hugh Mair	1828-1830	Argyle, Fort Miller, Northumberland
Various Supply Pastors	1831	
James Laing	1832-1833	
Denny Ray Thomason	1833	Argyle, Fort Miller
Joseph Parry	1833-1835	Fort Miller
Joel Wood	1835-1838	Fort Miller
James Stebbins	1839-1845	Fort Miller and Hudson Falls
Hiram Slauson	1846-1848	Presbyterian Fort Miller
James Stebbins	1849-1850	Fort Miller, Northumberland
Various Supply Ministers	1850-1851	Fort Miller
Abram Gibson Cochran	1852-1853	Fort Miller
Abraham Gulian Lansing	1854-1855	Fort Miller Presbyterian Church
Charles Dor Kellogg	1867-1868	Old Saratoga, Fort Miller
George Warne Labaw	1868-1872	Northumberland, Fort Miller
William H. Ford	1873-1874	Northumberland, Fort Miller
	1875-1877	Northumberland, Fort Miller

David Kline Van Doren	1878-1882	Old Saratoga, Fort Miller
J. Wilbur Chapman	1883-1885	Old Saratoga, Fort Miller
Edward A. McCullum	1886-1891	Old Saratoga, Fort Miller
John A Hainer	1892-1895	Old Saratoga, Fort Miller
Lyman Edwyn Davis	1895-1896	Old Saratoga, Fort Miller
George Albert Luckenbill	1897-1898	Old Saratoga, Fort Miller
Various Supply Pastors	1899	Northumberland, Fort Miller
Edward Carroll Wiley	1900-1902	Fort Miller
M. McTice, 9-mos. Supply	1902-1903	Fort Miller
Edwin Emerson Davis	1903-1904	Fort Miller (and perhaps Northumberland)
Jacob Van Ess	1904-1908	Northumberland, Fort Miller
David Crawford Weidner	1909-1913	Old Saratoga, Fort Miller
Charles Walter Kinney	1913-1928	Old Saratoga, Fort Miller
Jacob Servis LaRue	1928-1955	Hudson Falls Presbyterian, Fort Miller
C. Russell Doherty	1956-1958	North Argyle Presbyterian, Fort Miller
Various Supply Ministers	1959	
Raymond Vedder	1960-1963	Fort Miller
Charles Cornelius Anker	1964-1968	Fort Miller
Millard Maitland Gifford	1969-1972	Fort Miller

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THE BEGINNINGS OF THE FORT MILLER CHURCH

In some old papers and maps, and in legend as well, there was a sort of Village Common about where the Fort Miller Reformed Church now stands. Sometime prior to the year 1800, the land belonged to the Bleeckers of Albany, together with most of the other land in the village of Fort Miller. Another big land-owner was Ashabel Meacham, a tavern keeper, who lived in Fort Miller in what is now the home of Mrs. Jefferson Davis.

The lot for the church was given or sold by the Bleeckers about the time they had a division of their holdings with Meacham. To whom they made the deed is not known. This was before the organization of the County of Washington, and the records are not clear.

A group of interested citizens began to pray and work for a church as far back as 1813, and perhaps considerably before. We know this because the present church, erected in 1813 or 1816 (authorities differ), could not have been built, had there not been dedicated and generous Christians behind the plan. Money came in by public subscription (Fort Miller was much larger and more prosperous then), and the idea was that the new building would be available for all denominations.

The church was built by Shepherd Norcross, a local carpenter, who lived on Hatch's Point. The building, erected for \$2,000, consisted only of the present nave and balcony. Who used the church the next few years, is not recorded. At any rate, the "all denominations" plan appearing to fall, a Fort Miller Society (Jefferson Davis thinks it was the Temperance Society which was strong at that time), petitioned the Classis of Washington in 1822 to organize a church, in the following terms: "We, the subscribing members of a Society in Fort Miller, impressed With the importance of being formed into a Congregation, do earnestly request the Classis of Washington to organize us as a Church and receive us into their connection and under their care."

Subscribers Names:

Hezekiah Hubbard
Darius Norcross
Noah Payn
Garret Viele
Ashabel Meacham
Francis Gleason
John Van Tuyle
Samuel Bennett
John Bostwick
Simeon Odell, Jr.
Ludowicus S. Viele
Nathaniel Burnham
S.T. Shepherd
Ira Bragg

Rev. Philip Duryee was the beloved pastor of the Saratoga (now Schuylerville Reformed) Church and of Northumberland (now Bacon Hill Reformed) Church. He brought with him as helpers the Rev. Jacob Fonda (Union Village Reformed, now Greenwich United Church), and the Rev. John Dunlap, who probably came from what is now the First Presbyterian Church in Argyle.

With these capable men at the helm the organization took place, and the following persons were received by letter from the Reformed Protestant Dutch Union Church in Argyle, N.Y.: Benjamin H. Payn, Nathaniel Burnham, Hannah Darby, wife of Joel Gleason, deceased, Susannah V.D. Burgh, wife of Garret Viele, Johanna Swift, wife ofPayn, deceased, Sally Taylor, wife of Capt. S. Lewis, Polly V.D. Burgh, wife of Philip Viele, deceased, Tamur Andrus, wife of Hezekiah Hubbard.

Also received, by letter from the Second Presbyterian Church in Pittstown, N.Y., was Ludowicus S. Viele, who had also served as Elder in the Buskirk Bridge (now Buskirk Reformed Church). Some of our nearest Christian neighbors at this time were:

CHURCH	DATE ORGANIZED:
Schaghticoke Reformed Church	1717
Old Saratoga Reformed Church (now Schuylerville)	1770
Associate Presbyterian Church of Argyle (now South Argyle Presbyterian Church)	1785
First Presbyterian Church of Argyle	1793
Sandy Hill Presbyterian Church (Now Hudson Falls Presb. Church)	1803
Reformed Protestant Dutch Union Church in Argyle	1809
Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in Northumberland (Now Bacon Hill)	1821

The first recorded meeting of Consistory after the organization of the Fort Miller Reformed Church was held at the home of L.S. Viele, on December 20, 1823. The Reverend Isaac Van Hook is listed as president, which means he was the minister.

The ARGYLE-FORT MILLER CONNECTION.

Before the Fort Miller Church was organized, a great deal had been happening in neighboring Argyle (of which Fort Miller was part till 1818 when it was incorporated into Fort Edward). On October 16, 1809, the Dutch people from the Hudson River Valley had organized a church, and we find, on page 84, Vol. I, Misc. Deeds, Washington County, the following entry:

“We, the undersigned elders and deacons of the Protestant reformed Dutch Union Church in Argyle, do hereby certify that the name and title by which we and our successors are forever to be known and distinguished as a religious society or body corporate is “The ministers, elders, and deacons of the reformed Protestant Dutch Union Church in Argyle, New York”, in testimony whereof we set our hands and seal, October 16, 1809,” signed Hezekiah Turner, Ludwig Yungler, Jacob Dings, Casparus C. Shutt, Cornelius K. Schermerhorn. This was done in the presence of Judge Anthony M. Hoffman, State of New York, October 25, 1809.

Who was the minister that inspired these people in Argyle to step out in faith and dare? The records show that a number of good ministers were serving the area at that time (see page 7, “neighbors of Fort Miller). But it is only the record of the Rev. Philip Duryee that reads: “Having... labored diligently in rearing new churches .•• “ (Collegiate Church Year Book 1881, page 67), so that we must assume that it was he, a truly dedicated spirit, who reared the infant church in Argyle, just as he did a few years later in Fort Miller.

Little do we know of the sweat, the prayers, and the labors that went into this enterprise. But we do know that the property for the church was made available by David McNeal and his wife Nancy, on Farm Lot 110, for \$10.06 (Mrs. Mary MacDougall MacMorris, in her splendid book: “Argyle, Then, Now, and Forever”, reports that the land was not be leased for anything except for building a church). And we do know that, about 1814, a plain wooden church was built and, in 1818, two more plots of land were bought of Thomas Cox and wife Jane, perhaps for a Manse.

However, due to population changes, the membership decreased, and the church had to disband. The church property was sold at a Sheriff’s Sale to Ransom Stiles, who in turn sold it to the Methodists for \$368. This property is now a two-family house, owned by Curtis Knowlton, directly across from the Argyle Cemetery entrance on Salem Street. The parsonage was sold in 1847. It is now the home of Mrs. Lawrence Rouse and family.

Mrs. MacMorris doesn’t say when the Argyle Church disbanded. The year was 1838. But before it did, it left an indelible mark upon our Fort Miller Church. Not only through the Rev. Duryee, who organized us in 1822, but through five other ministers who served Fort Miller from 1817 to 1833. They were: Rev. Isaiah Younglove Johnson, Rev. Isaac Van Hook, Rev.

John McKelvey, Rev. Hugh Mair, Rev. James Laing.

It is true, some of these men appear neither in our Church Minutes of 1822 to 1930, nor in Dr. Edward Tanjore Corwin's Manual, our most reliable source for Reformed Church History. As a matter of fact, the Fort Miller Church minutes begin only after the organization, whereas the church - having been physically on the map - was definitely served. Then they Jump from the Rev. Isaac Van Hook (1824) to the Rev. D.R. Thomason (1833), evidencing a void of about nine years, which was certainly filled by someone.

At this point, I can hear the students of Reformed Church and Washington County history say: "What makes this man so certain the gap was filled by these pastors? He has never written history before! Where does his information come from? Let me pose a question: If I can show where previous historians have erred, if I can supply information to which they had no access, should I not be heard? For example: The usually reliable Jefferson Davis is incorrect when he says there never was a Presbyterian Church in Fort Miller. There was! I found evidence in 1) The History and Biography of Washington County, published 1894, and 2) in Princeton Theological Seminary, under the file of Rev. Abram Gibson Cochran.

Or take Corwin's Manual of 1902: It states that Isaiah Y. Johnson graduated from Williams College, Mass. In 1813. But Williams College supplied the date as 1808.

It has no date for Rev. Hugh Mair's death. It was November 1, 1854, according to Mr. A. Dingwall Fordyce, who arranged the publication of Dr. Mair's manuscript sermons in 1856 with a brief memoir of his life. It has only one line for J. Laing, not even his first name James. This booklet furnishes full details on him. It lists D.R. Thompson in two classes of New Brunswick Seminary, viz. 1833 and 1843. I established that it was the class of 1833 and that his full and correct name was Denny Ray Thomason. It says Joseph Parry went to Williams College. But Williams College says he never did. Don't misunderstand me, I am not criticizing Dr. Corwin. Had I been in his shoes, I would have made more mistakes than he did. His task was a gigantic one --well done. But he, like all men, was fallible. So let us proceed on my presumption that it was the Rev. Duryee who organized Argyle as well as Fort Miller, and let us see what the record has to say of him. (See page 10).

REV. ISAIAH YOUNGLOVE JOHNSON
1817-1821

Although the Rev. Isaac A. Van Hook's name is the first to appear in the minutes of the organized Fort Miller Reformed Church, the Rev. Isaiah Y. Johnson is commonly thought of as our first pastor. Isaiah Younglove Johnson was born in 1783. He graduated from Williams College, Mass. In 1808 and from New Brunswick Theological Seminary, N.J. in 1816. He was licensed to preach by the Classis of New Brunswick, N.J. He served Argyle and Fort Miller (not yet incorporated) between the years 1817 and 1821. Then he went to Schodack, N.Y. where he died on May 4, aged 41. The Rev. Charles Scott (Corwin's Manual 1879 ed. P. 324) says of him: "His expression was intellectual and bland; his manners affable, always courteous, cheerful and of easy dignity. He was attractive to the youth of his charges. His habits were very systematic. He generally retired to his study on Sabbath evening and selected the topic for the next Sabbath, while on Monday he visited his people. His great-grandfather was a Presbyterian minister in Ireland."

The Rev. Dr. Calvin Durfee, in his "Biographical Annals of Williams College, Boston Lee and Shepherd, 1871, pp.293-4) states: "Isaiah Younglove Johnson was from Columbia County, N.Y. He entered college in the fall of 1807, joining the Senior Class. He was not admitted as a member of the college, but was admitted to the recitations. He was a good scholar; he made up some back studies so that, at the close of the year, He was admitted to the Senior examinations, which he passed so creditably that he was not only admitted to the degree of B.A. but three years afterward (1811), when admitted to the second degree, he pronounced the Master's oration. He afterwards preached in Argyle and at Fort Miller, N.Y."

This emissary from Argyle is typical of the men who have made Christ loved and respected. A delightful person, with the desire, ability and drive to become successful in his chosen career.

REV PHILIP DURYEE.

1822

The Reverend Philip Duryee was born in New Utrecht, N.Y. in 1774. He graduated from Columbia College, N.Y. in 1795. He studied theology under the great Dr. John Livingston and was ordained by the Classis of New York, 1798. He served as missionary in the West from 1798 to 1802. He married Rachel Day of New York, on November 12, 1817. Duryee was one of those men who are always in demand. He served Old Saratoga (Schuylerville) and Easton from 1802-1807. In 1807 Union Village (Greenwich) made an arrangement with him for 1/3 of his time. So he served Schuylerville, Easton and Greenwich from 1807 to 1820. On December 6, 1820, Northumberland (Bacon Hill) called Duryee for 1/2 of his services. His annual salary was to be \$225 plus \$25 in labor and wood. This makes it look as if he now gave up Greenwich and Easton, serving half his time in Old Saratoga (Schuylerville) and the other half in Northumberland (Bacon Hill). On November 22, 1821, he incorporated the church in Bacon Hill as: "The ministers, elders and deacons of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in Northumberland."

It was during his service to Bacon Hill and Schuylerville, that the Rev. Duryee answered the petition of Fort Miller to organize their Reformed Protestant Dutch Church. In November 1828, he was called to the English Neighborhood Church in Ridgefield, N.J. which had just suffered grievously because of a secession. Now we read in the Collegiate Church Year Book of 1881, page 67, and the Collegiate Yearbook of 1886, page 60: "Having in his former field of labor taken great pleasure and labored diligently in rearing new churches (namely Argyle, Bacon Hill and Fort Miller --the author --), and being possessed of a kind spirit and gentleness of manner, knowing excellently well the things which make for, and secure peace, with mild persuasion he gained many friends in English Neighborhood, and labored diligently in his holy calling.

While in English Neighborhood, he added 112 members to the church, 84 of them on Confession of Faith. On February 6, 1848, he asked his Consistory for the dissolution of his pastorate. The kindness of his feeling for them is attested by the following statement (Taylor's Biographical Encyclopedia of N.J. page 462): "There is a considerable sum due me for wood and hay, and also in money. These arrearage I give to my Consistory~ that it may encourage all my friends to have my place filled. On April 3, 1848, the Classis adopted a resolution expressing their appreciation of his valuable pastoral labors. He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree by Rutgers College in 1834. He died in 1850.

REV. ISAAC A. VAN HOOK

1823-1824

This third minister from Argyle was a man in a hurry. He seldom stayed long, in anyone place, but he knew where he was going and what he wanted: A position, if possible, at Church Headquarters. Isaac A. Van Hook was born in 1791. He graduated from Columbia College, N.Y. in 1811 and obtained his B.D. from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1819. He was licensed by the Classis of New Brunswick, N.J., became a missionary to Spotswood, N.J. (1819-1821), to Stillwater, Sussex County, N.J. in 1822 and -in the same year to Beaverdam and Middletown, N.Y., to Kleyn Esopus, N.Y. and to Tyashoke (Buskirk) N.Y. He stayed in Argyle and Fort Miller from 1821 to 1824. In 1825 he cultivated the mission field at Wilton, N.Y., a church which was founded between 1824 and 1825 but which -apparently -was extinct by 1840. For the Rev. Arthur Voerman, former pastor at Gansevoort and Greenwich, remarks in his sermon given at the 100th Anniversary of the Gansevoort Church: "On September 19th, 1840, one Mrs. Margaret Thompson was received by letter from the late Reformed Dutch Church at Wilton."

In 1821, the Rev. Van Hook reached Headquarters and became Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Missions of our denomination. Sadly, however, he was not destined to stay long. Not because he did not want to, but because God called him. The precise date of his death is not known. As nearly as we can determined, it was 1834.

REV. JOHN McKELVEY

1827

John McKelvey was born in Covenary, Ireland, in 1801. He graduated from Belfast College, Ireland, in 1821. He migrated to Canada in 1822. He was shipwrecked on St. Paul's Island and was detained by sickness resulting therefrom at Quebec Hospital until 1823, when he joined his relatives in Port Hope on Lake Ontario, Canada. He then came to the USA and graduated from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1827. That same year he was sent out as a missionary to Argyle, Fort Miller and Wilton. He served these charges for one year.

He is next found as pastor of the Amity Reformed Church in Visscher's Ferry (now Vischer Ferry), N.Y. and the Niskayuna Reformed Church, N.Y. 1827 to 1830. The Consistory at Amity liked him and, in March 1828, made his salary retroactive to the time he began work among them, viz. November 1827. While pastor of this yoked parish, rumors had it that the Rev. McKelvey was a drunkard. In order to get to the bottom of this, an enquiry was held at the Amity Church on August 7, 1828.

On Sunday, September 26, 1971, Mrs. Gifford and I visited Mr. Howard Becker of the Amity Church on Vischer Ferry Road. Mr. Becker, a retired engineer from General Electric, Schenectady, N.Y. has written a tremendous amount of accurate material on local history. He had also written up this enquiry from the original minutes. Careful reading of the evidence given by 13 persons showed that they were totally unclear about the matter of alleged drunkenness. In fact, the two consistories voted to throw out the case because of insufficient evidence.

The facts we read were: The unmarried Dominic, who always drove fast, had been seen to bend a little in his seat, his face drawn as if in pain. He had come at full pace into a most difficult driveway and had struck a fence post. But not one of the thirteen witnesses would say the Rev. McKelvey was drunk. The Rev. McKelvey continued on for three more years, then he joined his family in Port Hope, Ont. Canada, in 1831, where he died in 1835, only 34 years Old.

But the gossip which started at Vischer's Ferry would not die. In our church, for example, McKelvey was thought to be so controversial, that his name was carefully kept off the list of ministers prepared for our 125th Anniversary. Many a good man has been ruined by vicious rumors. Could it not be that the insinuations started in Visscher's Perry bothered McKelvey so much that he really began to drink? Not only to assuage his pain, but to forget (temporarily at least) the faces of those who, with their loose tongues virtually ruined his career. At any rate, Corwin reports that while in Port Hope, McKelvey was deposed in 1831. But, so far as I can determine, we have never had a Reformed Church in Port Hope. So... his record, while a Reformed Church Pastor, is unstained.

REV. HUGH MAIR

1828-1830

Hugh Mair was a son of Archibald and Janette Woodbourn Mair and was born at New Dans, Ayrshire, Scotland, July 16, 1797. His father was a Captain in the British Army, and since his mother accompanied him, whenever possible, it was his paternal grandmother who gave the first direction to his mind and watched over him with affectionate Christian solicitude.

He was fourteen, when he entered the University of Glasgow. There he completed his curriculum in six years and then studied theology in Edinburgh under the Rev. Dr. Paxton, at that time the Theological Professor of the United Secession Church. At the age of twenty-five, he was licensed to preach by the United Secession Presbytery of Edinburgh and, for some time thereafter, was employed as a missionary in the Orkney Islands and other parts of Scotland.

He came to the USA in 1828, and shortly after his arrival was ordained and installed as Pastor of the Reformed Churches at Fort Miller and Northumberland (Bacon Hill), N.Y. After working here for almost two years, he accepted a call from the Presbyterian Church at Johnstown, N.Y. He was installed at Johnstown early in 1830 and stayed there until 1843. While there, he published four miscellaneous sermons and received an honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from the University of New York in 1842. In 1843 he resigned his charge and went to Brockport, N.Y. where he officiated as Stated Supply for 18 months. He then had a call

from the Church in Warsaw, N.Y., which he declined, although he consented to labor among them for about a year. In 1847, he went to Canada West and became the pastor of a church in Fergus in connection with the Church of Scotland.

It seems, however, that he always kept a warm spot for Johnstown in his heart. For, in 1854, in keeping with a promise made the year before, Hugh Mair returned to the church where he had served 13 years to conduct a Communion Service, even though his health was impaired. While he managed to reach Johnstown, it turned out he was unable to partake in the service, and he died in the house of his friend and physician Dr. Maxwell on November 1, 1854. The funeral was held on November 3rd and attended by many of his friends.

The tribute of one of them, a Mr. A. Dingwall Fordyce, (who, in the 1856 post-mortem publication of a series of Dr. Mair's sermons, wrote a brief memoir of his life) deserves to be remembered: "I never knew a man who had a stronger sense of right than he. While he was ordinarily charitable in his judgments of his fellow men no one was less tolerant of palpable moral obliquity, especially in a member of the Church or a minister of the Gospel, and I never heard more scathing words from mortal lips than have sometimes fallen from his in such cases. The pulpit was emphatically "his throne". His sermons were strongly of the Scottish type. They were deeply evangelical in their tone, constructed with logical accuracy and elaborated with great care. They were distinguished for an exuberance of splendid diction, which made the truth literally blaze upon the minds of his hearers; and were delivered with a boldness and earnestness which might well have denominated him "a Son of Thunder".

While the Rev. Mair served the Fort Miller Church, he had in his congregation a man, whom Jefferson Davis calls: "The greatest mind ever developed in Fort Miller". This man was Professor Dr. Tayler Lewis, son of Captain Samuel Lewis of Revolutionary War fame and of Sally Taylor Lewis. He was born in Fort Miller, went to school in this village (which once had three small school houses), and we pay tribute to the teachers who gave him such splendid training as to enable him to become professor in Union College, Schenectady.

Professor Lewis, LL.D. who also served for a time on the Consistory of the Fort Miller Church, wrote the following beautiful tribute to Dr. Mair: (taken from *if Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York*" by Hastings Index done by our own Rev. Dr. Edward Tanjore Corwin) "My acquaintance with Dr. Mair commenced in the fall of 1828. He had then just come from Scotland, been received by the Dutch Church and sent as a missionary to our poor congregations in Argyle and Fort Miller. His preaching there, and in the adjoining Church of Northumberland, soon called out an interest, and an attendance, which provided him a good settlement, without the further aid of missionary funds. "After remaining for two years, he received a call to the Presbyterian Church in Johnstown, N.Y.

"I esteem Dr. Mair among my most valuable acquaintances and warmest personal friends. To him must I ever attribute a most marked change in my own life and labors. I had been practicing Law for several years in the village of Fort Miller, and the result was a dissatisfaction with the profession, with myself, and almost everything else. In fact, I was in a state that might almost be called one of spiritual desolation. My books were few, my society very limited, my health not the best, and my profession growing continually more and more distasteful to me.

"You may well I supposed what relief came from the society and conversation of Dr. Mair. Although he was not at that time a Doctor of Divinity, it was evident that there was something about this learned yet unpretending Scotsman to please every condition of life. "He preached with great acceptance. He was frequent and faithful in visitations and catechizing, after the old Scottish mode. The power of his pulpit exercises, and the great beauty and simplicity of his instructions in his parochial visits presented a contrast which charmed me greatly. He insisted upon my attending these catechizing, and the vivid remembrance of them would Make me love the man, if I had not had other causes for it in the warm personal friendship and the many acts of disinterested kindnesses which he ever afterwards manifested towards me.

"Mr. Mair was an excellent Greek and Hebrew scholar. His familiarity with Homer especially was remarkable, but no less so his love of talking about him and reading him aloud whenever he could find one Who had interest enough to listen to him. In these recitations, he would get into a loud, boisterous manner, like the old Homeric Rhapsodists, or public chanters of the Iliad, so completely was he carried away by his enthusiasm. He was less skilled in phonetic and grammatical niceties, but saw much in Hebrew roots. In these he was ever discovering a depth of meaning, often real, but sometimes perhaps only existing in his own rich, religious and deeply Biblical imagination. He was ever urging me to study Hebrew with him. But I had then no thought

of doing any such thing. Thus he Would, at Time almost provoke me by his importunities, and his continual reflection on my imperfect education, as it seemed to him, in being ignorant of so important and even sacred a branch of knowledge. Every man, he would say, who has any pretensions to liberal education, ought to be a Hebrew scholar. In short, he worried me out. To get rid of his importunities, more than for any other reason, One day I borrowed his grammar and learned the Hebrew alphabet. It was one of the turning points in my own life. The study of Hebrew soon became my one ardent pursuit by day and night. Ennui fled. The disagreeable things of the Law were forgotten, and the whole after current of my life was changed. All my studies, feelings, aims, took a different direction, until the Law was relinquished for that profession of a teacher to which I have ever Since been devoted.

“The remembrance of my intercourse with Dr. Mair is full of cherished solicitations. From personal knowledge, I am convinced that his last dollar would have been freely shared with any friend who needed it. He was ever seeking out and trying to do good to his own countrymen, sometimes subjecting himself to repulsive treatment which he would never have borne on his own account. Some men of a different school of Theology would say that there was not enough of what they would call “decided active piety” in him. But there could not be a greater mistake. His Scotch hilarity and fondness for anecdote might strike some of that class unfavorably. But for all that, he was a most devout, a most lowly-minded, spiritually-minded, modest Christian. Dr. Mair had a habit which I have seldom seen in other clergymen. A short, social visit to a friend, whether in the parlor or in the study, he would request to have closed with prayer. “Just a short spell of prayer before we go,” he would say. And then would follow one of the most touching appeals to the God of Mizpah! The God of friends and friendship, that I have ever heard.” Thus ends the story of, I believe, one of the most anthemic “Saints” Fort Miller ever encountered.

REV. JAMES LAING
1832-1833

This Rev. Laing presented a real headache to me. All I had to begin with were these words from Corwin’s 1902 Manual: “LAING, J. ARGYLE, 1832-3”. Thus to Argyle I went to dig for information on this mysterious man. While in the Argyle Free Library, I came across a Presbyterian account which mentioned one Robert Laing of South Argyle who had preached there about the same period. Assuming that, perhaps, the full name of the Rev. Laing had been Robert J., I followed that lead. What a colorful life that of Robert Laing had been! A man of commanding eloquence and a forceful speaker, but with a spirit, that was restless. It was said of him by his South Argyle Presbyterian Church members: “When he’s in the pulpit he should never come out. And when he’s out, he should never come in.” For Robert drank and had to be rebuked and finally be “loosed” from his charge in South Argyle in 1823.

Since this date, while intriguingly having all the same digits as Corwin’s figures, was not the correct one, I decided to keep searching, hoping that I would find another Laing whose first name would begin with a “J”. Finally, Princeton Theological Seminary supplied me with the Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, 1751-1887, by the Rev. James Brown Scouller, Pittsburgh, Pa., published by the United Presbyterian Board of Education in 1887. In this book, Scouller, who had been a Presbyterian Pastor in Argyle and a fine historian, speaks about a James Laing, and the more I read about him, the more I knew he was my man. James Laing was born in 1788 in Perthshire, Scotland, graduated from Glasgow University in 1815, continued the study of theology, with interruptions, from 1816 to 1825 (that’s a longtime, perhaps he had to save money for his education?), was licensed in 1825 by the Relief Presbytery of Glasgow, came to the United States in 1830, joined the Dutch Church and was ordained by the Classis of Washington, N.Y. in 1832. Then he became the Pastor of the Dutch Congregation in Argyle, N.Y. (and Fort Miller). He joined the Associate Reformed Synod (Presbyterian) of New York in 1833, and became the Pastor of the Andes and Cabin Hill Presbyterian Churches in Delaware County, N.Y. from 1834 until his death in November 18, 1858, from congestion of the lungs. Looking back on my research on Robert and James Laing, I discovered that they both came from Scotland, both immigrated into our area, and both died in Delaware County. And they both spelled their last name the same way. Strange coincidences ---or were they related? I do not know the answer.

REV. DENNY RAY THOMASON

1833

Almost as elusive as the Rev. Laing was the Rev. Denny Ray Thomason. He turned up as Thomasson, Thompson, Thomson and Thomason. The minutes of our church carry the following information: "A meeting of the church members of the Fort Miller Church occurred on February 10, 1833. The meeting opened with prayer by the Rev. D.R. Thomasson. Resolved: "that the Rev. Joseph Parry be invited to preach in the church next Sabbath as a candidate for the ministry, to succeed the labors of the Rev. D. R. Thomasson." I also found this curious document in our files: "Received of the Consistory of the 'Dutch Reformed Church of Fort Miller's; \$53.69 in full for my services as a preacher of the Gospel in that church, May 6th, 1833." Signed D.R.Thomasson. With the pastor's name signed on the receipt, I thought that the Clerk of Consistory might have made a mistake in spelling. Hiram Slauson (another of our ministers) has his name spelled: Slusen, Slawson, as well as Slauson. The 1849-50 Gazetteer of Washington County (article on the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church at Fort Miller) lists -all in one paragraph -the Viele name as: Velle, Viele, Vlelie. The writer probably figured one of these attempts would be correct. One poor speller can really throw a researcher off the scent. But who was D.R. Thomason alias Thomasson? Corwin, my usually unflinching source listed neither! Instead he had two D.R. Thomasons, one in the Class of 1833 and the other in the Class of 1843.

Since the latter date did not fit into our history, I was convinced that D.R. Thompson of the Class of 1833 was our man, and that Corwin either had confused one of the two men or, for some reason best known to himself, D.R Thomson chose to sign his name "Thomason". After all, both mean the same thing: "Son of Thomas", Thompson coming from the Scottish and Thomason from the Scandinavian background. Help on this matter was supplied by Robert Stewart Thomason in his "A Brief History of The Family Thomason," New York City, 1945 (History Alcove, State Library, Albany, N.Y.): "Spelling was almost entirely phonetic in the 16th,17th, and part of the 18th century, so that there is little doubt that the families of Thomason and Thompson are synonymous and that a branch of the family spelling its name Thomson may easily be descended from a family that "spelt" their name Thompson, or Thomason, years ago". (Page 3) This same little book, encountered quite by chance, showed the following: "Rev. Denny Ray Thomason, the third of that meant to come to the United States, was born in Thaxted, Essex County, England, January 9, 1799. His father's name was Thomas Thomason, his mother's Eliza Thomason. Both were born in England. "Rev. Thomason came to New York in the year 1830. He published a book in New York City, March 1, 1831, entitled: 'Teetotalism As A Rule or Duty Unknown To The Bible'. Although arriving in New York in 1831, his name doesn't appear in any City Directory until 1855-56.

"His first son, Lim. V. Thomason, was born in Philadelphia, Pa. in 1832. His second child also a son, Thomas James, was born in Philadelphia, Pa. in 1833. After the birth of the two children, Rev. Thomason and family are found living in Clinton, Louisiana, in 1839. Frederick Priestly Thomason was born there on August 12, 1839. In 1849, we find the good Reverend in charge of an Emigrants Friends Society, Which operated out of 99 South Front Street, New York City. This apparently was abandoned in 1855, Since it was no longer listed anywhere. In 1856-51, he appears in the New York City Directory, with an office at Room 14, Bible House, at 9th Street, N.Y.C.

The writer of this volume didn't know where Denny Ray Thomason had been from 1833 to 1839. We can supply one small link in the chain: In February 1833 he was here! Planning for a new minister to come! Perhaps the winter in the North Country had been too much for his small baby and Mrs. Thomason, who was expecting again and wanted to go back to Philadelphia for the delivery of the second Child. Anyone knowing our severe winters up here, can well imagine that the South and Louisiana were too much for them to resist.

In 1879 Rev. Thomason moved to Perrineville, N.J. where he died on September 16, 1879. He was buried in the family plot in the church cemetery at Manalapan, N.J., and there is a fine picture of it (page 60) in Robert Thomason's book. In Fort Miller, however, the Rev. Joseph Parry took over in the Spring of 1833.

REV. JOSEPH PARRY
1833-1838

Search as far as you will! You'll never find a more colorful, fascinating minister than the Rev. Joseph Parry! He was born at Miserdine, Gloucestershire, England, on October 1, 1794. His father and grandfather both were ministers in the Church of England. Mr. Parry was confirmed in the same church, when 16 years of age. He was pastor of an Independent Church in Broadway, England, in 1824, and served there eight years. He married Eliza Elliott in 1819 and removed to America in 1832.

The winter of 1832 and 1833 he passed in Hudson, N.Y., and in the spring, with his family, removed to Fort Miller, N.Y. where he labored as Pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church for two years. In 1835 he moved to Sandy Hill and, soon after, began supplying that church. Thus, from 1835 to 1838, he served both Sandy Hill (Hudson Falls Presbyterian Church) and Fort Miller on the Sabbath.

Our minutes relate that -, a meeting of Consistory convened at the home of L.S. Viele, Sept. 16, 1833, and was opened with prayer by the Rev. Joseph Parry. "On April 7, 1838, Rev. Parry informed Consistory that he had a call from the Sandy Hill Presbyterian Church (Hudson Falls) to preach there the whole of the time; that he felt disposed to accept the same and wished to be discharged from the church. The request was granted. On April 13, 1838, with Rev. Edward H. May acting as Moderator, Rev. Parry received formal dismissal from this church (1822-1930 Minutes). Joseph Parry assumed his duties as Moderator of the Hudson Falls Presbyterian Session on October 6, 1838. Rev. Reuben Smith, of Waterford, pens the following comments at Presbytery on the Consistorial Report handed in by Parry:

- (1) Members appear to have been dismissed in some cases, without designating the places to which they removed, or the reasons for such dismissions.
- (2) No word appears of the late Installation of the present pastor and the Session are hereby directed to see that such record be duly made. It was!

The Historical Survey, Presbyterian Church of Hudson Falls 1803-1926, page 10, states: "From 1834 to 1837 there was no pastor for the Sandy Hill Presbyterian Church, but the Session was active and for part of the time, at least, the Rev. Joseph Parry served the congregation, although not an installed pastor. Parry was of the Dutch Church when he came here, but he worked hard for our church and, in 1838 he transferred from the Classis of Washington to the Troy Presbytery, and did become installed as pastor here in 1839."

At his installation (June 1839) a sermon given by one Rev. Snodgrass, from Ecclesiastes 5:1, surely qualifies as one of the strangest and freshest sermons ever given. Consider the text: "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil." Perhaps Snodgrass was more interested in the second verse: "Be not rash with thy mouth, nor let thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few! (Hist'l. Manual, 1877) On September 24, 1839, he married again: Mary L. Ives, of Sandy Hill. He stayed in Sandy Hill and served that church a little over two years.

Then we lost track of him. In 1859 we find him as pastor of the Advent Christian Church (still on Main Street in Hudson Falls. Rev. James Faulkingham is now pastor there.) He was also its chief contributor, being a wealthy man. "At an advanced age but with sound body and vigorous mind, he is yet one to be honored for what he is, and had done." The Historical Manual twits him a bit. "Parry was a little changeable in his theology." That he was. First an Episcopalian, then Reformed, then Presbyterian, again Reformed, then Advent Christian. Yet, although his theology often changed, his zeal never did. He was one of those rare men Who worked hard and effectively wherever he was. The writer of the Historical Manual pays Parry a magnificent tribute: "He is always kindly and warm-hearted, a devoted worshipper and servant of his God, with a clean, vivid sense of duty, and a hearty scorn of every one who dares to trifle with the truth, or to slight its claims.

He is, in short, a man who will be deeply revered and esteemed by those of whom friends can be made; but also one, whom old offenders and ardent self-worshippers will neither care nor dare to meet." I discovered this information on Rev. Parry through the cooperation of Mrs. Warren Coon, Secretary of the Hudson Falls Presbyterian Church. These are some of the treasures I handled: 'Kingsbury and Queensbury Records (Session Minutes) from 1825-1859.'" "Historical Survey Presbyterian

Church of Hudson Falls” 1803-1926 (this Church was incorporated in 1848).

“Historical Manual of the Presbyterian Church in Hudson Falls,” published by the Session in 1877. ‘This most valuable tool was shared with me by Miss Esther Sherman, who is related (on her mother’s side, (Baucus), to Rev. Charles Dor Kellogg). The book was published at Sandy Hill, N.Y. by John Dwyer Steam, Book and Job Printer, 1877. As for information regarding Rev. Parry’s service to the Advent Christian Church, the Rev. James Faulkingham, present pastor, told me that they formerly had minutes containing valuable data, but that they are now lost.

THE END OF THE ARGYLE CONNECTION

Argyle had always been primarily Presbyterian country and, as time went on, the Reformed Protestant Dutch Union Church was having an increasingly difficult time. Some people died, others moved away, and funds became insufficient to maintain the congregation. The following very interesting Classis of Washington information, derived from Sage Library in New Brunswick, N.J. relates the final story of the melancholy decline and sad death of the Argyle Church. In the Spring Session of 1837, when the Classis of Washington convened at Schaghticoke, N.Y., the following churches were listed as active:

CHURCH:	ADDRESS:	MINISTER:
Argyle	Argyle	None
Easton	Easton	None
Fort Miller	Fort Miller	Joseph Parry
Jackson	Battenville	Wm. Pitcher
Northumberland	Schuylerville	None
Old Saratoga	Schuylerville	E. May
Schaghticoke	Schaghticoke	H. M. Boyd
Tyashoke	Buskirk’s Bridge	Wm. Pitcher, S.S.
Union Village	Greenwich	B. Van Zandt
Waterford	Waterford	None
Wynantskill	Waterford	E. Slingerland

The Fall Session of Classis, 1837, showed Rev. Joseph Parry and Elder John Pattison present for the Fort Miller Church. The record shows that we then had 52 families, with 280 members. At that meeting Argyle was represented only by Elder Thomas N. Clark. No minister was there. At the April 1838 Classis Meeting, again no minister was present for Argyle, and only Elder Thomas N. Clark was there. (Ludowicus S. Viele was listed as Elder from Fort Miller). At the Fall Session of Classis, October, 1838, Argyle was finished. No pastor, no elder to represent it any longer. The Fort Miller Consistory, on March 20, 1839, under Rev. Joel Wood’s leadership, resolved that ... “L.S. Viele and J. Stewart be a Committee of Conference” to visit Argyle. This is the last reference to that church. Probably the “conference” had to do with the disposal of property.

It must have been a severe blow to the founders of the Union Church in Argyle, as well as to our people, when it disbanded. The loss of a church is always a sad thing. The past is no more. New beginnings must be made. And thus, the Argyle-Fort Miller Connection came to an end. But our friendship with Argyle and its people was to remain unimpaired. You have already read about what happened to the Argyle Reformed Church building and the Manse. But what became of its bell? Mr. Charles H. Van Ess, of Greenwich, N.Y. in 1943, compiled a brief sketch of the Classis of Saratoga and its churches. He declared: “When the Argyle Church disbanded, the bell was moved to Fort Miller.”

Our records, however, show nothing of the sort. In fact, we did not have a bell until 1940. And Deacon James Petit told me, that the first bell which our church owned was obtained by him, Clarence Sanders Sr. and Malcolm Sanders from the former Methodist Church of North Greenwich (in 1940), and was placed by them in our tower. The present full-toned bell belonged formerly to the Fort Miller Baptist Church which was organized in 1858 and died in 1933. Mr. Carroll Carpenter, his brothers Clifford Carpenter and Rev. J. Henry Carpenter, Executive Secretary of the Brooklyn Mission and Church Federation, worked through the Rev. Kenneth Roadarmed of the Baptist Missionary Society to purchase the building and the bell. Two bids came in. One was for \$700.--, but Mr. Carpenter’s bid was for \$1000. So the property went to him (now the Richard Kidwell’s property). The Baptist Church was razed, and their bell became ours. Our first bell was then given to the Fort Miller Wesleyan Methodist Church, organized 1945 through the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Durling. In July 1968, that congregation gave

up their connection with the Methodist church, merged with the Pilgrim Holiness Fellowship, and became "The Wesleyan Church". The Rev. Carl D. Timpson is now pastor.

REV. JOEL WOOD
1839-1845

Corwin says simply: "Wood, Joel, Fort Miller, 1840-45. Had been a missionary to the Indians." Jefferson Davis says of him: "October 11, 1839, Rev. Joel Wood is shown as pastor. He may have been employed as such some time prior to that date. He continued to serve as such pastor regularly until February 13, 1840, when a call for him to become pastor was put forth. His salary was to be \$350 per year. The Call was moderated by Rev. David A. Jones. Wood continued as pastor and got mixed up in the difficulties in the church which began about that time, which finally split the church and killed it entirely for several years. A lengthy statement signed by him is spread on the minutes, and he wrote others which were not recorded in the minutes, but are among the old papers (those of Jefferson Davis, which I have not had the privilege of reading, the author). It is noted in May, 1843, that his health was feeble. He presided at Consistory, March 17, 1845. The date of death was June 6, 1845. His age was 49 years."

But let our Minutes bring you some of the interesting events from Joel Wood's Ministry: The Rev. Wood believed that the best way to get started was to begin! On October 28, 1839, before his installation, he offered the following for the consideration of Consistory: What can be done to increase the number and interests of the Sabbath School? What can be done to put into operation a singing school of the first order? What special means shall be used to prepare the Church for the commemoration of the Lord's Supper, which is expected, according to the appointment of Classis, on the second Sabbath in November? The Singing School idea passed. The matter of Sabbath School was laid on the table. It went through shortly afterwards. Each month there was a concert by the Sabbath School. The money collected went to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. On March 7, 1840 it was resolved: "That the Sabbath School in this place be auxiliary to the Sabbath School Union of the Reformed Dutch Church."

The Call was presented to Rev. Wood on March 16, 1840. Just prior to the Call, an amusing situation developed over the collection of Pew Rent.. Let the Minutes tell the story: September 22, 1838. Resolved: "That Mr. Fuller take the book containing the Pew Rent, part of which is uncollected, and collect as much as he can in one day, then give the book to Mr. Harris, and Mr. Harris take the fee and collect the balance, and that both men report their success at the next meeting." December 10, 1838 Resolved: (everything was handled this way in the early day a good resolution did the Job!) "That the Clerk of Consistory take the book containing the sale of seat in 1818 and give to each of the Deacons an equal portion for collection of the one half now due, and that they collect the same forth with." October 11, 1839. Rev. Mr. Wood was invited to preach the Gospel and SELL THE PEWS!

Joel Wood had a passion for missions, a concern which was not always shared by the Consistory: February 1840. A collection is to be taken up for the Missionary Cause on the first Sabbath of each month. March 21, 1842. Resolved: "Of all monies arising from the monthly collections allover the sum of \$15 be appropriated to the Board of Domestic Mission." Perhaps because of this strong emphasis, resistance arose to Pastor Wood's program, and it became very difficult to raise his salary, and Mr. T.N. Clark and L.S. Viele were appointed a committee to draft an application for aid to the Board of Domestic Missions. There is no record that it was ever received. On June 10, 1843 Ludowicus S. Viele became the first Superintendent of the Sabbath School. A Sunday School celebration was set for July 4th, 1843. A committee of 9 persons was appointed to make arrangements.

On March 6, 1844, the Consistory met at Joel Wood's home, the present Manse. (The Woods were the second tenants here, Col. Rogers, his Wife and family, having been the first to live in it.) It was resolved: "That the balance of the money collected on THE FIRST SABBATH IN EACH MONTH BE APPROPRIATED TO REV. WOOD'S SALARY". The faithful action taken in February 1840 was knocked out. Money intended for Missions, was used to pay Pastor's salary. On December 13, 1844, it was resolved: "That Mrs. Whiting be permitted to hold a Singing School. No damage must be done to the church, and all must be orderly." Resolved: "That a committee of three shall be appointed to clear the church of such spectators as shall make any disturbance in the singing school, or shall injure the house," The three strong men were: Samuel Lewis, Pelatiah Harris and

At the same meeting. "Whereas it is reported that some members have made bets on the late election, Resolved: "That the President, at his leisure, shall talk to such persons and give any such advice as he may see proper." Joel Wood really gave me a hard time. How could he have died at the age of 49 and also have been an old man, as Jefferson Davis intimates? That was my problem. It seemed well nigh insoluble, until I received this information from the *Intelligencer* (denominational church paper) of June 19, 1845, via Sage Library: "In the death of Mr. Wood. the church of Fort Miller has sustained an almost irreparable loss. His piety was undoubted, his zeal becoming, his labors abundant. His love for his people discovered itself in repeated and constant acts of kindness. In the hour of affliction, he was a friend indeed, and by these and other means, he endeared himself not only to the church, but to the whole community, "Mr. Wood commenced his labors at Fort Miller, in September, 1839. by invitation from the Consistory, with a view to his settlement. After a trial of three months, guided by the great Head of the Church (as we trust), the Consistory invited him to become their pastor. This invitation he accepted, and was installed by the Classis of Washington, on June 25, 1840. During the time of his labors at Fort Miller, the church has at two different times been visited by the outpourings of the Spirit; and as the fruits of these gracious visits of God's Holy Spirit, and His blessing upon the labors of His servant, and in answer to the prayers of His people, seven by certificate, and thirty-three on confessions, were received into the communion of the church, previous to 1839.

"Mr. Wood was for some time employed as a teacher and missionary among the untutored Indians of our own country. His was truly a missionary spirit. Directed by the finger of God, he left Greenfield, in the county of Saratoga, April 7, 1820, and arrived in the Choctaw nation, in Oklahoma, September 22nd of the same year, where he remained actively engaged in his Master's work, in the employ of the A.B.C.P.M. (American Board Commissioners of Foreign Missions) until April, 1830, when, in consequence of his untiring efforts and constant labors for the spiritual improvement of the Choctaws, his health failed, and it was necessary for him to return to the North. On application, he was released from the service of the Board for five years. A part of this time he spent in preaching to the churches at Milton and Corinth, in the county of Saratoga. He was licensed by the Albany Presbytery in 1832, and ordained by the same in 1833. After this, he was again received into the service of the Board and labored for some time among the Tuscarora Indians in western New York. But having a desire to return to the former field of his labors, and this wish being approved by the Board, he returned, in the winter of 1835, and continued to labor, enjoying the fullest confidence of the Board, and of all his missionary brethren. But owing to the amount of labor to be performed, and to the climate of the country, his health again failed, and it was found necessary for him, in winter of 1839, to give up all idea of missionary labor in that part of the country. By the advice of his physician and friends, he returned to his native place, where he arrived in April, and was finally released by the Board in the fall of the same year. It was then that he commenced work at Fort Miller.

"Few men, with his strength, have accomplished more or him it may truly be said: "His heart was in his work." His character was irreproachable. Such was his deportment, that he rebuked sin in whatever form it was to be met; and if actions are a test of character, the surviving relations have no reason to mourn as those that have no hope." It was Mrs. Kenneth (Inez) Germain, of our Church, Who helped me locate Joel Wood's grave. A clipping she had carried in her purse for many years stated that Joel Wood was buried in North Milton Cemetery, which is three miles west of Saratoga, on Route 29. On Holy Thursday, 1971, almost breaking my neck in the process, I visited the cemetery and found his grave. The inscription reads: "Rev. Joel Wood, died June 6, 1845, in the 49th year of his age. Pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church at Fort Miller,"

Rev. Joel Wood, a lover of Christ, of the Indian people, of children, education and good music, met his Maker with joy. Consistory sometimes out-manuevered him, but he "fell on sleep with an unblemished character, remaining steadfast until the end. It may be instructive to see why Joel Wood was proud to have his gravestone state that he was pastor of the Fort Miller Church. Consider this Consistorial Report of June, 1845, (Minutes of General Synod, Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, Vol. 16 (1841-46), page 460:

CHURCH:	MEMBERSHIP:	PASTOR:
Fort Miller	250	Joel Wood
Northumberland	250	Hiram Slauson
Gansevoort	200	J. Du Bois
Old Saratoga	220	C. H. Chester
Union Village		Vacant
Schaghticoke		Vacant
Waterford	200	John Whitbeck
Jackson	220	J.H. Pitcher (org. 1833, died 1874)
Tyashoke (Buskirk)	230	J.H. Pitcher, S.S.
Wynantskill	300	Jacob Lansing
Easton	100	D.A. Jones

One year and three months go by without a meeting or Consistory. Then a Call was issued to Rev. James Stebbins, on September 28, 1846. Rev. Hiram Slauson, of Northumberland, was Moderator.

REV. JAMES STEBBINS
1846-1848

Princeton Seminary General catalogue, 1894, helped me to flesh out the person of Rev. James Stebbins. He was the son of Luther and Mahala (Judd) Stebbins and was born July 18, 1813, at Caldwell, N.Y. He made a public profession of his faith in the Presbyterian Church of his native town at the age of 17; pursued his preparatory studies under Rev. Dr. Lyman Coleman, in Burr Seminary, Manchester, VT, and graduated from Union College, Schenectady, N.Y. in 1840, as a teacher. He taught school for two years at Brainard, N.Y. He entered Princeton Seminary in 1842, from which he graduated in 1845 after the full three years course. He was licensed by the Presbytery of New York, April 17, 1845, and ordained as an evangelist November 3, 1852, by the Presbytery of Burlington at Plattsburg, N.J. Upon leaving the Seminary he entered at first on the work of teaching in Liberty County, Ga. from 1845-1846, and then became Stated Supply of the Reformed Dutch Church at Fort Miller, N.Y., June 14, 1846-May 1, 1848 and again May 10, 1850, April 1, 1851 of the Presbyterian churches of Plattsburg and Plumstead, N.J. June 11, 1852 -April 8, 1856. While there he supplied the Witherspoon Street Presbyterian Church (a Negro church), from May 7, 1871, until Aug. 21, 1875, and preached frequently also at Cedar Grove near Princeton.

In 1878 he moved to Newark, N.J., where he lived without charge until his death, January 12, 1892, in the 79th year of his age. He was a faithful, cheerful worker. He married September 6, 1848, in Princeton, Miss Ruth Sexton Olson, who died July 28, 1862. One daughter, the wife of W. R. Bruyere, M.D. of Newark, N.J. survived him.

The Princeton Catalogue statement, that he was here as pastor in 1850-1851, is probably true, although it is not borne out by our minutes. But our records are scanty. The time was most distressing and flammable. The next paragraph will give an idea how distressing! "At a meeting of the male members of the Reformed Dutch Church of Fort Miller, held in the church on October 11, 1848, to meet a committee appointed by Classis for consultation in regard to the welfare of the church, the following question came up: Who Are Members of Consistory in The Church at Fort Miller?

After consultation and examination of the facts in relation to the question, the committee: Jacob Fonda, C.R.Chester, and Elder Schermerhorn, expressed the unanimous opinion that the old Consistory was still the Consistory of this Church, viz.

Elders:	Deacons:
Samuel Lewis	Pelataiah Harris
John Pattison	Thos. B Thompson
Thos. M. Clark	Thos. McCollum
L.S. Viele	James Fuller
Joseph Stewart	

However, "in view of the peculiar state of the church" the committee advised a new election as soon as convenient. With Rev. C.H. Chester as Secretary, this opinion was sustained and it was resolved: "That we proceed to a new election, and that a meeting of the male members be called for this purpose." Jefferson Davis' comment here is very enlightening: "The reader will note that October 11, 1848, the Committee from Classis which met with our members to assist in settling the differences between members of the Church and Consistory, arising out of the construction of the Dam in the river at Fort Miller, recommended that a new Consistory be elected. "It was more than six years thereafter that the suggestion was carried out. There was no meeting of Consistory, no church activities, no pastor, and the Dutch Church did not function during this time."

This statement is substantially, but not entirely, accurate. Jefferson Davis, in his assertion that our church died in 1848 and that nothing took place except the "tired resolution of 1854 until 1867, based his Judgment upon the Minutes of our Church. These were all he had to go by. Had Mr. Davis read the Northumberland Minutes, he would have found this entry: May 27, 1849: "The Northumberland Consistory at this meeting voted to let their minister Rev. Hiram Slauson preach at Fort Miller every Sabbath afternoon for the present." Again, had Mr. Davis had access to the Princeton Theological Seminary records, he would have read: "Rev. Mr. Stebbins served Fort Miller from 1846-48. AND AGAIN FROM MAY 10, 1850 TO APRIL 1, 1851." These two items, backed by the testimony of the Northumberland Church and the meticulous scholarship of Princetown Seminary, prove definitely that work in Fort Miller did not stop in 1848, but continued through April 1, 1851. The "Tired Resolution" was this: Consistory met in 1854 and said: "The name and style of this church shall remain the same."

THE QUARREL THAT KILLED OUR CHURCH

What was the cause of all this confusion, these strong undercurrents of hatred that ran all through this period? It was a quarrel between the mill owners and the farmers in Fort Miller over a dam that, according to the Champlain Canal Commissioners' report of 1821 Assembly Journal 1820-21, page 874, had been thrown across the Hudson at the head of Fort Miller Falls. Remember that the old Champlain Canal originally contemplated slack water navigation between Stillwater and Fort Edward. In their report for 1817 (page 590) the Canal Commissions state: "The navigation around Fort Miller may be effected by erecting a dam across the Hudson River of three feet in height and (by) excavating a canal about one mile long, having two locks of 10.321 feet lift each. This canal or channel was a cut running from the Hudson River, between the present Donald Keen and Herman Durling houses, to the Champlain Canal that would be fed by the higher level of the Hudson River created by the dam. When it was finished, it emerged on the south side of the present Lock No. 6.

At first this seemed a good idea, as it would arrange for transportation of produce and merchandise and, at the same time, provide water power for industry at the new dam site. In fact, competition for this water power was keen. One Russell Burt, on the west side of the river, offered to build 100 feet of the dam adjacent to his shore at his own expense, if the state engineer would locate the dam so as to accommodate his saw mill. This was done and; beginning 1821, Mr. Burt received the benefit of about four feet additional head of water for his mill.

Barent and John Bleecker, one or two years after the erecting of the State Dam, erected a grist mill, saw mill, carding machine and fulling mill on the east side of the river, connecting their flume with the dam, from which a plentiful supply of water was drawn and for which, for a considerable period, they paid no rent to the state.

One Samuel Mayhew, also apparently ran a saw mill at the same site. These men greatly rejoiced in the three-foot dam, which provided all the water they needed. But the farmers were not so happy. The water which backed up from the dam often ruined their fields and fences and meadows. Their lands eroded, particularly after heavy spring rains'. From the time the dam was erected until January 1, 1827, they applied for and received damages amounting to \$960.00. Later the claims totaled almost \$3,000.00.

The Legislature then passed an act, April 8, 1829, providing: "If the damages occasioned by the erection and continuance of the Fort Miller Dam shall amount to a sum, the interest on which shall be greater than the amount annually to be received for the use of the surplus water of said dam, the Canal Commissioners are hereby required to lower said dam, so far that such damages

will be no longer sustained.” Barent and John Bleecker offered a gross sum of \$100.00, but since this failed to reach the desired sum, about 150 feet of planking on the dam were removed. The rest was to be taken up in the winter.

But over the winter months, the Legislature had second thoughts on the matter (perhaps due to the lobbying of certain mill owners). And on April 9, 1830, (See Laws, page 155) it reversed itself: “It shall be the duty of the Canal Commissioners, as soon as conveniently may be after the passage of this act, to cause the timbers to be replaced upon the dam erected across the Hudson River at Fort Miller. The fourth section of this act reads, and I quote: “If within thirty days after such appraisal as aforesaid, or in case of appeal; if within thirty days after the final determination thereof, the persons interested in the continuance of said dam, shall pay into the treasury of this State, a sum of money, which after deducting therefrom the sum of \$1500.00, the estimated amount of benefit to the State, shall equal the amount of said damages, that in such case the dam shall remain; otherwise it shall be the duty of the Canal Commissioners to remove the same.”

In simple English language this meant, the dam would remain, if the mill owners would pay into the Treasury of the State of New York a sum equal to the total cost of damages claimed by the farmers, plus \$1500.00. Apparently they paid what was required, for in 1836 the dam was still in place. In 1836, however, New York State seemed to have suffered from a number of summer droughts, for the Hudson, in spite of the dam, was lower than the Champlain Canal and did not help navigation, since the water from the feeder now ran in reverse, thus acting as a drain from the Canal, but ensuring a steady supply of water to the mill owners. .

The Canal Commissioners in their annual report for 1836 (See Assembly Doc. 65) say: “In a time of low water in the Hudson River last summer, the water in the pond above the Fort River Dam was lower than the top water line in the Canal..... Unless the dam is raised, it will be necessary to construct another set of gates, to use the feeder for navigation at times of low water in the river.”

But apparently, the matter was tabled and no action taken (perhaps, again due to pressure of lobbyists?) and the Commissioners in their Annual Report for 1846 (See Assembly Doc. 14, pages 54/55) state: The side cut (feeder) at Fort Miller has for years acted as a drain from the canal to the river with which it connects, at all times of low water in the Hudson River at that place. This has been chiefly due to the decayed condition of the gates.” Since the completion of the Glens Falls Feeder, the State had no use for the side cut, nor could it perceive that it would be needed in the future. The Commissioners, therefore, directed the Superintendent of Repairs, in August, to provide necessary materials and to close the cut (feeder). The mill owners were on the job, however! Before any expense had been incurred in carrying out the work, one of the proprietors of the mills of Fort Miller appeared and presented two petitions from dealers in lumber and mill owners, asking the Canal Board to repair the dam at that place, and also the side cut (feeder) connecting the dam with the Champlain Canal.

NOW, note the power of the mill owners and the sagacity of the Canal Board. The Board, while refusing to repair the dam, advised the acting Commissioner to “keep up the connection between the Hudson River at Fort Miller and the Canal, and that he repair the gates in such a manner as in his Judgment will be safe for public works.” The Canal Commissioners reported (Annual Report 1847, Assembly Doc. No. 20, page 4,) that “the side cut locks at Fort Miller have been rebuilt and new lock gates put in for the season.” It was this sort of behavior of the Legislature and the ease with which actions at the highest level could be influenced by the mill owners, that aroused the abiding antagonism of the farmers. Yet, some farmers had sons who wanted to work in the mills. They disagreed with their father’s antipathy toward the mills. They saw clearly what the mill owners contended, that the future prosperity of Fort Miller was bound up with the mill interests. As indeed it was! In 1849, the Commissioners again recommended that the dam be abandoned and the use of the side cut as an appendage to the Champlain Canal be discontinued, since it was of no use to the navigation of the river. When the Legislature dragged its feet again, it came to pass that one dark night, a group of disgusted men, up to now law abiding citizens, but now desperate, risked possible criminal action by dynamiting the whole dam.

While the State again did nothing, this dynamiting further inflamed the relationship between the two generations of Fort Miller, for jobs were lost. How sharply the town was divided, one can judge by the Appendix to the Canal Commissioners Report for 1847, where the signatures of 37 persons had urged the re-tention of the dam, and the signatures of persons had opted for its removal. As far as I can determine, it was in 1849 that the dam was blown up. At any rate, in that year, after speaking of the abandoning of the dam and the closing of the side cut at Fort Miller, the Report of the Commissioners declares: To that

portion of the resolution asking “what damages have been incurred to petitioners by the acts of inhabitants living above the such dam which the State ought to pay,” the Board can only say that they have no knowledge of any damages done to said dam by individuals, for which the State should make compensation to the mill owners.” Signed: Christopher Morgan, Secretary of State, Washington Hunt, Comptroller, Alvah Hunt, Treasurer, L.S. Chatfield, Attorney General, Charles Cook, Canal Commissioner.

And so the dam was gone, the side cut filled in. Slowly-but surely, the mills closed their doors and moved. With them moved many of the people of Fort Miller. And the Fort Miller Church, whose members had been involved in the destruction of the dam, settled down to die. The Phoenix was consumed by its own act. But life kept stirring within the ashes. In a few years the Church would reappear, repentant and chastened, and once again ready to begin its real work of making Jesus Christ known and loved.

THE AFTERMATH

As the moving men came in taking Fort Miller people to many different localities, individual families, now enemies instead of brothers, tried to settle down to every day living, not aware that nothing would ever be the same again. What a thriving little town Fort Miller had been! Look at its businesses:

Merchants:
G.H. Bragg
F.M. Bassett

Grocers:
Nichols and Basset
Charles Ackerman

Hotels:
M.B. Perkins
Chatherine Mills

Physician:
Reuben Blawis

Shoemakers:
James Vanderwerker
Leonard Vanderwerker

Tailors:
Thomas Kelley
...Allen

Post Office:
Seneca Bragg -
First Postmaster

Blacksmiths:
Sidney Wait
Joseph Brown

Grist Mill:
Wm. Skellie

Saw Mill:
Samuel Mayhew

Plaster Mill:
(owned by Bleecker)
L.S. Viele

Carpenters:
Merritt Norcross
Robert Moscript

Wagon Makers:
Samuel Pike
Wm. Durkee

At Moses Kill, near the Clement Burkhardts, halfway between Fort Edward and Fort Miller, was a Canal Grocery, kept by James Calkins. Only the Fort Miller Church began to show signs that not all was well. Its families, torn apart by the explosion and the emotions which had caused same, would not come together again in the spirit of Christ, would not forgive and love each other. And the church was empty. Some strong man was needed. But God saw fit to keep the Phoenix waiting.

REV. HIRAM SLAUSON 1849-1850

In the midst of the turmoil of Fort Miller, we find the Rev. Hiram Slauson of Northumberland, quietly serving his Lord. He was one of the finest and most tested Christian men our church, and our denomination, ever had. He was born in Greenville, N.J., Dec. 5, 1810, and graduated from Union College in 1837 and Union Seminary, N.Y. in 1840. He was ordained in the Congregational Church September 17, 1840. He was at Whitehall, N.Y. from 1840 to 1842; at Northumberland, N.Y. from 1843-1853, and in the Port Jervis Reformed Church from 1853-1857. From 1857 to 1861 he was stated supply at Unionville, Conn. and Whitehall, N.Y. In 1862, he accepted a call to the churches of New Salem and Clarkesville, N.Y. Here he labored with great acceptance until 1866, when he was stricken with epilepsy, which completely disabled him, so that from 1866 until the time of his death at Whitehall, N.Y. Dec. 5, 1891, he was an invalid, helpless and unable to provide for his family.

We have no record of how they carried on during the twenty-five long years of illness, but we know that his wife cared for him unwaveringly and with devotion. About the hour of his death, she -deprived of her love and charge -was stricken with paralysis and died before the close of the day. Both funerals were held at the same hour. They had walked together in Christian love and labor for many years and in death they were not separated.

“The record of Hiram Slauson is that of a most worthy and devoted minister who, under a mysterious Providence, had for long years to wait and suffer. ‘They also serve who only stand and wait.’” (Minutes of General Synod, June 1892, Vol. 17 in bound volume 1890-1893, Sage Library New Brunswick Seminary, N.J.) Rev. Slauson had plenty to do in Northumberland. He stayed there for 10 years. And the longer a man stays in a parish, the more demands are made upon his time. And so the troubled or shall we say dying? Fort Miller Church called upon him. Unable to disregard their need, he requested permission from his Consistory to preach in our church on Sabbath afternoons. I saw his handwriting on this request. It was ominous: Irregular and jerky, showing definitely symptoms of his oncoming sickness.

Permission was granted. And Hiram Slauson took up the additional charge, in spite of haunting fears about what the future had in store for him. Ah, but Slauson had faith! He was a man of warmth, compassion and love. The work his wife put in during his illness was done because she loved him. She heeded neither the toil nor the wounds.

Can you imagine a man like that, knowing something of what awaited him, standing idly by while one of his denomination’s beloved churches was breaking up because of anger, Jealousy, vindictiveness, and every dark passion? It is my belief that Slauson tried everything he could to get our church going again. But the physical strength required for the job was not at his command. It is impossible to tell how Slauson agonized over us, how many were his prayers of intercession, but we can be sure that no stone was left unturned to bring us back to the Saviour.

REV. JAMES STEBBINS
1850-1851

The Washington County Gazetteer of 1849-50 declares that: “Ministers of other denominations who have stately preached here (at Fort Miller) are: Elder Washburn, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Elders Swain and Webb of the Baptist Church, Rev. John Dunlap, of the Associate Reformed Presb. Church, Mr. James Stebbins, a licentiate of the Presbyterian Church.”

The Rev. Stebbins had been with Fort Miller before (1846-48), when the trouble at our church was reaching its peak. Now this great pastor’s heart brought him back for a second try. After all, he was to be an evangelist, and the healing of souls was his main purpose. Besides, he was a teacher (it is interesting to see how many early clergymen were in that profession), and he did not think Fort Miller’s people beyond learning. He had a very sensitive, Christlike spirit. He liked people for what they were, and he regarded the church’s problem as one he would try to solve by God’s grace.

Like the Rev. Hiram Slauson, he did not rush in like a fool, but trusted that, one day, the Lord of Love would melt the hearts that were iced over with lovelessness; that the God of Light would illumine the shuttered minds; that the Creator who caused “the morning stars to sing together for JOY” would get people talking and laughing once more. Stebbins, like God, wanted our people to take giant footsteps in the realm of kindness.

God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform. He achieved much, I believe, through the quiet, dedicated lives of Slauson and Stebbins. But He was preparing a therapeutic shock for that, Hollanders in the person of Rev. Abram Gibson Cochran. I say therapeutic because I believe Cochran provided the stimulus needed by the Fort Miller Church to emerge top-side up.

THE PRESBYTERIANS AT THE FORT MILLER CHURCH
1854-1855

Jefferson Davis declares that the Hollanders hereabouts fought so strenuously against the formation of a Presbyterian Church that nothing ever came of it. Against this statement, even though it may be backed up by his documents to which I have no access, we must marshal the following information: The History and Biography of Washington County, Gresham Publishing Co. Richmond, Ind. 1894, says:

“The Presbyterian Church in Fort Miller began in 1851 and lasted until 1867.”

A map of this area, sent by our friends John and Margaret Feidt, dated 1865, shows only a Presbyterian Church. We know, of course, that it met, if at all, in our Reformed Church, but the “Reformed” name had given way to “Presbyterian”. Princeton Seminary, seldom wrong has this guidance: “Rev. Abram Gibson Cochran was licensed by the Presbytery of Troy, Jan 4, 1854, and ordained by the same, Jan. 17, 1854, starting at the same time installed pastor of the Presbyterian church-at-Fort Miller, N.Y. He was released from this charge. But let’s resume the argument.

Remember, 1854 was the year of the “Tired Resolution”. And when a vacuum occurs, something always rushes into it. And the teacher and clergyman A. Gibson Cochran not only was in the right place, but had the gifts and talents to do something about the religious life of this community. Having graduated from a Presbyterian Seminary, what was more natural than an attempt to circulate a Petition to save for Christ the people of this community in the Presbyterian tradition? This probably took about one year to conclude, and when the Presbyterians discovered that the Dutch would not go along with them, they withdrew, and Cochran was “released” from this charge in 1855.

When I first came upon these facts, I had some rather unkind thoughts of Mr. Cochran, uncharitably thinking that he could have been out to feather his own nest. But I was straightened out by this note of Davis’: “April 17. 1867 the Church of Saratoga (Church of Washington was no more) sent a Committee here to get the Church going again. It was composed of Rev. A. O. Lansing, Rev. A.O. . Cochran and Elders Oliver Brisbin and Nathan Corliss. It ••• apparently policy that placed Cochran on this committee. He had been preacher here for a long time and had many friends. His influence aided much in the work of re-organization.” (Minutes 1822-1930)

Previously I said that Rev. Cochran was a “therapeutic shock for our Dutch people. He was that because when he tried to establish a Presbyterian Church here he was probably counting upon their native stubbornness and pride to swing back into the Reformed Faith. For Cochran loved the Reformed Church and he wound up his career as a Reformed Minister, moderating a call upon a minister at Northumberland as late as six years before his death.

REV. ABRAM GIBSON COCHRAN 1854-1855

Abram Gibson Cochran, son of Edward and Esther Fox (Gibson) Cochran, was born Feb. 11, 1822, at Windhall, VT. He made a public profession of faith in the Congregational Church at the age of 14. He received his preparatory training in Burr Seminary, Manchester, VT., under the Rev. Dr. Joseph D. Wickham, and became a student in Middlebury College, VT. but was obliged to leave college in the middle of his Junior year. He then engaged in teaching in Cecil County, MD., for two and one half years. He then entered the Seminary at Princeton in 1848 and remained until May 1850. From 1850 to 1859 he was principal of the Argyle Academy. This was a mathematics and classical school incorporated under State Regents. It had about 90 pupils, a library of nearly 1,000 volumes and was co-ed. One of the most famous graduates of that school was George A. Hoadley, whose stay at Swarthmore College issued in a textbook on Physics which was standard for 30 years, Cochran was the 11th Principal there. (Argyle, Then, Now and Forever, Mary MacDougall MacMorris, Bullard-Glencratt Printing, Also History of Washington County, N.Y. 1737-1873 Everts and Ensign, Philadelphia, Pa. 1878, page 236).

From 1853-55 Cochran taught at the Hudson River Academy in Fort Miller. This (according to Everts and Ensign, page 327) was in the Fort Miller building, formerly called Guy’s Hotel. He was also its first principal. This Academy, situated between the Petit and Kidwell homes closed in 1864. In the notebook of Catherine Petit Hatch I found a delightful program of an Exhibition of the students or the Academy. It consisted mainly of recitations, a tragedy, and plenty of music. The Prospectus of the Academy shows (1854), that instruction will begin on April 17th and continue 16 weeks. Instruction will be given in Mathematics, Ancient Languages, History, Natural Sciences, etc. Tuition is to be charged by the Quarter of 12 weeks at the following rates:

COMMON ENGLISH \$3.00
HIGH ENGLISH (INCLUDING COMMON) \$4.00

ANCIENT LANGUAGES (INCLUDING ENGLISH) \$5.00
FRENCH AND DRAWING (EACH EXTRA) \$3.00
MUSIC ON THE PIANO (WITH USE OF) \$10.00
INCIDENTALS \$0.25

1854 saw Mr. Cochran also licensed, ordained and installed as pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Fort Miller Reformed Church. According to Princeton Seminary, this work was finished in 1855, and he was released from this charge at that time.

From 1855-1861 Rev. Cochran supplied the Reformed Church in Easton, N.Y., being also Principal of Schuylerville School. He was Stated Supply of the Presbyterian Church of Fairfield, N.Y. and also Principal of the Academy there, from 1861-1863. From 1863-1865 he was Principal of the Marshall Seminary (Quaker) in Easton, N.Y. while, at the same time supply in the Reformed Church in Easton, NY from 1863-1870; the Reformed Church of Gansevoort, N.Y. 1871-1882; the Easton Church again 1883-88, and the Reformed Church at Middle Falls, N.Y. 1888-93. No trace exists anywhere of this Reformed Church at Middle Falls. But I think it was formerly the West Greenwich Baptist Church, now an Antique Shop in Middle Falls. This church was started in 1837. Mrs. Edna Pike, County Historian, in "An Historical Survey of Washington County, 1935", quotes a Rev. Finlay as saying: "The building, its records destroyed, and now disbanded, was formerly used by many denominations." I believe this is the church Cochran used. He knew it well. He had lived in Easton, N.Y. from 1863-1888, but resided in Middle Falls from 1888 until 1895, and at Schuylerville, N.Y from 1895 until his death.

THE RE-ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

1867

On April 17, 1867, the Phoenix of the North spread its wings and rose from the ashes. The Classis of Saratoga, convinced apparently by the number of people who were willing to band-together to fashion a "new" congregation, believed the time to be ripe and sent a Committee of Pour to supervise the reorganization of the Fort Miller Church. The members of the Committee were:

Rev. A.G. Lansing, chairman,
Rev. A.G Cochran, Elder Oliver Brisbin, Elder Nathan Corliss.

The Committee Meeting was opened with prayer and presided over by Rev. A.G. Lansing. J.H. Viele was chosen Clerk.

"The following persons presented themselves as candidates for church membership, and after being duly examined, were received on Confession of their Faith in Jesus Christ:

1. Mary Ackerman,
2. Eliza B. Harris,
3. Mary A. Bristol,
4. Jane Harrington,
5. John J. Livermore,
6. Sheldon A. Viele,
7. George Pearsall,
8. Halsey D. Buck,
9. Louisa H. Day,
10. Margaret Guy,
11. Electa A. Taylor, wife of Miles Low,
12. Jennie M. Lynes, wife of Wm. Guy,
13. Amanda M. Barber, wife of Hosea Jakeway,
14. Laura V. Harris,
15. Stephen V. Sturtevant,
16. George W. Luthwait,
17. William Harris,
18. Israel Day,
19. James H. Harris,

21. Sarah Josephene Payn, wife of Gg. Pearsall,
22. Mary Kellas, wife of the late Q.W. Bain,
23. Amanda Day, wife of Ambrose Clapp,
24. Hellen Bennett,
25. Emilie Denio, wife of Daniel Viele,
26. Joanna Robinson, Wife of Philip Viele
27. Catherine Vanderwerker, wife of Alex .Viele,
28. Harriet Viele, wife of Sidney Sutfin,
29. Eliza Vandenbursh wife of Leon. Vanderwerker,
30. Josepha Stebbins, wife of Marcus Button,
31. Sidney Sutfin,
32. Alexander Viele
33. Philip Viele.

The first 13 not having received the rite of Baptism, were baptized on the following Sabbath, when received the righthand of fellowship. Closed with prayer. “

Rev. A.G. Lansing, President.

J.H. Viele, Clerk.

May 10, 1867.

These members were almost entirely new. “The old, numerous crowd with their enmities did not enter into the work at all, if indeed they were still around the village. Our members had gone into other churches.” (J.D. Davis). Thus the work began anew. And the Rev. Abram G. Lansing, of Old Saratoga Reformed Church, became also the pastor of Fort Miller.

REV. ABRAM GULIAN LANSING
1867-1868

The Rev. Abram G. Lansing was born in 1829. He graduated from Union College in 1853. He was a Missionary of the American Board, among the Choctaws (Indian Territory) 1854-1858; New Salem and Clarksville, 1858-1862, Old Saratoga 1862-1867; Old Saratoga and Fort Miller 1867-1868; Missionary at Pella, Iowa, 1866-1870; Otley, Iowa, 1870-1872; Norris, Ill. 1873-1874; Irving Park, Ill. 1874-1877; New Salem, N.Y. 1878-1885; Blue Mountain, N.Y. 1885-1887.

The following write-up of Lansing, apparently done by Rev. W.N.P. Dailey, appears in the file of the Union College Alumni Office: (It was also included in the Minutes of General Synod.) “The Rev. A.G. Lansing, of the Classis of Ulster and pastor of the Blue Mountain Church, died Sept. 8, 1887, aged 58 years. “Mr. Lansing was a student at Union College in 1853, but on account of some physical difficulties was not able to pass through either a complete course of literary or theological training. Having placed himself under the direction of the American Board as a missionary to the Choctaws, his labors for four years were in Indian Territory. A bronchial infection then compelled him to return to the East. When his health was regained, he became pastor of the New Salem and Clarksville churches. “From those churches, in 1862, his pastoral relation was severed, and he became pastor at Schuylerville at the beginning salary of \$600. and parsonage. There he spent five years successfully, serving also at this time the Reformed Church in Fort Miller.

“After that period he performed missionary work at Pella and Irving Park. For seven years he labored in the West, and in 1878 returned to his first charge at Salem. There he served for seven years, and finally was called to the Blue Mountain Church.

“For two and a half years he was permitted to labor, and then the Master had him cease, and among these people he died. Revivals of religion attended his labors, and he was particularly successful among the young in gathering them into the fold. “He was fond of music, and in it trained the youth and gained influence over them. He had the gift of languages, was a pleasant speaker and held the attention of his hearers. He was courteous as a minister, possessed of tact; as a companion genial. The keynote of his life was to live for Christ. Hence, for him it was gain though in life’s prime, to die.”

When Rev. Lansing left Schuylerville for Iowa in August 1868, the Schuylerville Church gave him this testimonial: “We Elders

and Deacons esteem it our duty and privilege to say that we feel this separation to be a sore bereavement. During the whole time Mr. Lansing has ministered to us in holy things, he has ably and faithfully preached the Gospel in demonstration of the Spirit. He has faithfully discharged the duties of pastor and has greatly advanced the interest and efficiency of the Sabbath School. etc.” After bemoaning the fact that they will hear his voice no more, they continue: “We trust God will bless him and his labors on the Missionary Field which the Board has appointed him, for which by education and his full heart gushing forth for the good of souls, he is so well adapted.” (Pages 715-717. Minutes of Old Saratoga Reformed Church, 1858-87)

The following events which took place during Rev. Lansing’s ministry are most interesting: “In 1867 two other fields have been providentially opened, one at Brownsville and the other at Doe’s Corners (Wilton). At the latter place the audiences are of a very interesting character. They are growing in number. There is prospect, in time, of organizing a church at that place,” (Cf. Rev. Isaiah Markle’s report in Gansevoort Church Minutes, page 78). This is the only report I found of this anywhere. Could this have been a renaissance of the group thought dead about 1840?

REV. CHARLES DOR KELLOGG
1868-1872

Charles Kellogg was born at Ann Arbor, Mich. July 3, 1842. He was educated in the Peekskill Academy, the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, Princeton University (Class of 1861), and Princeton Theological Seminary, ending his studies there in 1863. He was licensed to preach by the Second New York Presbytery, which was known as “Old School”. He was ordained by the Presbytery of New Castle at Wilmington, Del., on October 21, 1863 and married Mary Jane Baucus of Bacon Hill one week later, on October 28, 1863. This marriage lasted until May 8, 1921, when Mrs. Kellogg died. Their first pastorate was in Wilmington, Del., where they stayed until 1868. From 1868 to 1872, he served as pastor of the Reformed Churches of Fort Miller and Bacon Hill, N.Y.; 1872-1879 he was pastor of the North Reformed Church of Passaic, N.J. On October 1, 1879, he returned to our area to take charge of the Presbyterian Churches of Hudson Falls and Fort Edward, as Stated Supply. About one year later he was installed as pastor. In 1899 he gave up the work at Fort Edward, devoting all his time to the Hudson Falls congregation.

On October 1, 1919, he presented his resignation, which was not accepted. Then he began the 41st year of his pastorate. On September 8, 1920, he again presented his resignation and earnestly requested the congregation to accept. At this time he was elected Pastor Emeritus, which honored position he held, Summa Cum Laude, until his death August 22, 1923. He was 81 years old. While Rev. Kellogg was serving Fort Miller, the following Consistorial Report made out for Classis (April 17, 1872) demonstrates better than anything I can say, the power and spirit of this remarkable servant of God:

“The Church at Fort Miller has during the latter weeks of the ecclesiastical year been in the enjoyment of a season of religious interest of remarkable efficacy and power. The membership of the church has thereby been increased two-thirds, and the number of male workers considerably more than doubled. The working force of the church seems increased not less than two-fold. The quickened zeal of the people is still further evidenced in the increase of salary one half. The Spirit of God which has been at work with such power in our midst, has, we trust, not yet withdrawn His presence. There are others whose hearts God has touched, who have found peace at the Cross, and other. Who are working with earnest purpose and determined resolution. With gratitude for all that have received and the disciples of divine power we have seen, still pray for continued ministrations of power on the hearts of men.”

This report showed 45 members received on Confession of Faith, of adults baptized, 15 under Bible instruction, 55 in Sabbath School 78 families on the roll. More was given for Benevolences (\$515.90) than for Congregational purposes (\$419.00). In Northumberland, too, the same type of work had been going on: “The increasing zeal and earnestness of this little branch is especially evinced in their growing liberality both at home and abroad. During the year the salary of their pastor has been increased one half, and the contributions to benevolent objects abroad exceed any previous in nearly equal proportions.” (Classical Report 1869)

The people at Bacon Hill let him go with greatest reluctance. So did Fort Miller. Our Consistory expressed its regret at parting with him “who has so faithfully and acceptably tilled the pastorate of this church for nearly five years, and whose labors have been signally blessed in the conversion of many souls and a large addition to the membership of the church.” As far as I can

discover, Rev. Kellogg was the only minister over whose leaving both Congregation and Consistory made such a great fuss. He was decidedly worth it!

The Historical Survey, Presbyterian Church Hudson Falls, 1803-1926 (pages 13-16) in dealing with Rev. Kellogg and his 41 years of service to the Hudson Falls Presbyterian Church, has the following to say: "In reading the records of the Church, which cover over one hundred years, Mr. Kellogg's pastorate clearly stands out as the most brilliant in the history of the church. "Mr. Kellogg established a very high and broad reputation as a Theologian, scholar and teacher. He was an orator much in demand on great occasions. "Those who came under his pastoral care in sorrow and happiness have wonderful stories to relate. In every story we can see the great pastor's interest, strength, heart of mercy and Christian love. Before Rev. Kellogg came, Session spent most of its time disciplining erring members. Mr. Kellogg turned a new page, and the Session became more interested in securing and cultivating new members. Under his ministry the present church was built at a cost of \$30,000. "As a citizen of the county, Mr. Kellogg was interested in projects that made for a more progressive village. As first president of the Hudson Falls Free Library Association, Rev. Kellogg was very active in securing for the town the present beautiful Library building.

Pastor Emeritus, Rev. Kellogg truly distinguished himself for a minister who has guided a church for 41 years to give over the reins to a younger man gracefully, merits highest praise. On Sundays, Mr. Kellogg occupied the seat of honor at the pastor's right in the pulpit and usually took some active part in the services. During the week he spent much time in calling, and in his calls he always glorified the Church. He never gave counsel, except when invited. It is difficult to write an appreciation of so rich a life in prose. His life was a poem in action."

REV. GEORGE WARNE LABAW
1873-1874

The Rev. Labaw was born on February 29, 1848, near Clinton, N.J., the son of John Chamberlain Labaw, merchant and farmer at Harlingen, N.J., and Mary Warne, a descendant of Thomas Warne, one of the 24 Proprietors of East Jersey.

During his early years he lived at Sergeantsville, Jersey City and Harlingen, N.J. On March 1, 1864, he entered the Rutgers Grammar School, and Rutgers College in September, 1865. While at college he was a sophomore orator and a third honor man; a member of Delta Upsilon fraternity, and Phi Beta Kappa honorary fraternity. After graduating with the degree of A.B., he spent nearly a year teaching in Illinois four months at Warrensville, DuPage County, and three months at Dunton, now Arlington Heights, Cook County. Then he entered the New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1870 and graduated in 1873, having spent his first summer's vacation at Whiting, Maine, doing mission work under the auspices of the Maine Missionary Society of the Congregational Church and the second summer at Cooper, Maine. He received his A.M. degree from Rutgers in 1872.

Mr. Labaw was licensed by the Classis of Philadelphia, at Harlingen, N.J., on May 27, 1873, and was dismissed to the Classis of Saratoga, being ordained at Northumberland, N.Y. and installed as pastor over the Reformed Churches of Northumberland and Fort Miller. He first came to Northumberland as a Candidate in March, 1872, being recommended by Rev. H.B. Gandt, D.D. The "Churches" (Northumberland and Fort Miller) were pleased with the talent of the young man and authorized the Clerk of the Northumberland Church to tell Mr. Labaw that they were unanimous in their wish to grant him a Call when he had completed his seminary career (Northumberland Minutes 1849-1923, pages 79-80). Labaw had a very difficult time while in Fort Miller. He had to deal with two drunkards, who were also gambling too much, and with a woman who had run off with another woman's husband. Rev. Labaw asked for dissolution of his pastorate on April 15, 1874, to take effect in June of that year. His reason: "My health is inadequate to perform the labors required," There was no hard feeling over his leaving. (Northumberland Minutes 1849-1923, page 82). He next served the Reformed Church Mission at Ridgewood, N.J. for about three months. He then became pastor of the Reformed Church of Blue Mountain near Saugerties, N.Y., 1874-1882; Colts Neck, N.J. 1882-1889; Preakness, N.J. 1889 until his death, on January 9, 1927. He was also Stated Clerk of the Classis of Passaic, N.J. 1898-1921; a member of the Board of Superintendents of the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick 1908-1913 and a member of the General Synod's Committee on Necrology 1907-1912. Mr. Labaw published several articles in various publications as follows: "Centennial Discourse at Preakness, 1901" in the Paterson Morning Call, November 2, 1901.

“Preakness and the Preakness Reformed Church” “A Historical Discourse at the Centennial of Preakness, N.J.” in 1902 “A Genealogy of the Warne Family in America, principally the Descendants of Thomas Warne, one of the 24 Proprietors of last Jersey” 1911. He aided in compiling the pamphlet “Avocation, Gardening and Genealogy”. On November 25, 1874, Mr. Labaw married Catherine Beekman Mosher, daughter of Lewis H. Mosher, M.D. of Millstone and Griggstown, N.J. They had no children.

When Rev. Labaw resigned as Stated Clerk of the Classis of Passaic, N.J. the Classis adopted the following resolutions: Resolved: “That the Classis of Passaic extend to Rev. George Warne Labaw its hearty thanks for faithful services of year. as Stated Clerk. “That as a token of our esteem and love we present to our brother a gold watch fob bearing the emblem of the Reformed Church on its face and, on its reverse, the following inscription: A TOKEN OF APPRECIATION FROM PASSAIC CLASSIS TO GBO. WARNE LABAW, FOR 23 YEARS’ SERVICE AS STATED CLERK, APRIL 19, 1921.”

While at Sage Library in New Brunswick I held in my hand Labaw’s “A Historical Discourse” This “Discourse” turned out to be a beautifully bound book of 344 pages. It is a magnificent work of scholarship, by a highly competent historian. Whatever Mr. Labaw did, he did surpassingly well.

REV. WILLIAM H. FORD
1875-1877

This pastor of ours was born in Lebanon, N.J. in 1848. He graduated from Union Theological Seminary in New York City in 1873. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Nassau, N.Y. in 1813; became pastor at Northumberland and Fort Miller, N.Y. 1875-1877; Northumberland, N.Y Presbyterian Church 1877-1880; New Scotland, N.Y. 1880-1882; Matawan, N.J. Presbyterian Church 1882-1883, Middle Brooklyn, N.Y 1883-1887; Bushwick, N.Y. (Brooklyn) Presbyterian Church 1887-1891; and Brooklyn, N.Y. 1891-1894. Demitted 1895.

The Call to Rev. Ford was extended by the Consistories of Northumberland and Fort Miller in the Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, over the Union Store in Northumberland. The Call was moderated by the Rev. D.K. Van Doren, of Old Saratoga (Schuylerville). In our Consistory Minutes of March 1. 1876, it is Resolved: “That our collections for next year be made by the envelope system, for the support of our pastor, beginning May 1st.” The collection for Home Missions, begun by Joel Wood, was continued. \$7.30 was sent. On June 4, 1816, an offering of \$4.50 was received at a Communion Service for the poor of the neighborhood.

In December 1876, it was Resolved: “That measures be taken at once to cushion the church seats.” Miss Brisbin and Miss Sutfin were appointed to care for this. Jefferson Davis says: “They were really good cushions.” (Minutes 1822-1930), lasted for many years and had to be recovered only in 1930. After demitting the Ministry, Mr. Ford was hard to locate. Even his Seminary could not supply the date of his death!

REV. DAVID KLINE VAN DOREN
1878-1882

Just prior to the coming of Rev. Van Doren, our Consistory passed this resolution: “To exclude from the church all gatherings except those which are entirely of a religious nature, subject to the decision of a majority of the Consistory.”

Rev. David Kline Van Doren was born in Pluckamin, N.J. on February 18, 1841. He graduated from New Brunswick Seminary in 1867 and was licensed to preach by the Classis of New Brunswick that same year. His first charge was West Hurley, N.Y. (1867-68); then Currytown and Spraker’s Basin (1869-73); then Albany 3rd (1873-75).

He served Old Saratoga 1874-83 and Fort Miller 1878-82; Scotia, N.Y. 1883-85, Middleburg, N.Y. 1885-90. He then became District Superintendent of the American Bible Society Mechanicville, N.Y. from 1890-1898, then Pastor at New Salem and

Clarksville, N.Y. (1898-1902) and Schodack Landing (1902-01). When he came to Old Saratoga (the Call was issued June 18, 1874), he was to receive \$1200 per year, plus parsonage. We do not know how much he received for his services at Fort Miller.

The following items show some of the things he felt important while at Fort Miller: March 20, 1881: Moved: That \$5 of money raised for Missions be sent to the Board of Education, Brooklyn, NY. July 8, 1882: Resolved: "To introduce a hymn and praise book for use of choir and church, the same as is now used in Schuylerville, which was adopted by General Synod in 1880. (Consistory bought a large sized hymnal for the pulpit and also several of the smaller size.) October 7, 1880: J.H. Viele moved: That an effort be made to carry out our Synod's requirements to support Foreign and Domestic Missions, Board of Education and Publication, Widows and Disabled Ministers Fund, also the Church Extension Fund." George Kingsley and John Wagman were appointed the Committee to achieve this.

Rev. Van Doren resigned November 21, 1882. He had greatly deepened the spiritual life of the church, had paid off some of the debt and had noticeably improved the property and grounds (Page 140, Saratoga Minutes, Vol. 1858-1887) Rev. Van Doren died in Schodack Landing in February 1908.

REV. J. WILBUR CHAPMAN
1881-1885

J. Wilbur Chapman was born in Richmond Ind. June 11, 1859. He graduated from Lake Forest University, 1879 and from Lane Seminary in 1882. During the years at Lane Seminary, he developed a marked talent for music. His voice was of peculiar timber, round, full, sonorous, abundantly strong, and yet of a smoothness and mellowness that softened the most unresponsive. The indefinable, almost weird power of these appealing tones, hallowed and more pungent by intense love and hunger for soul, continued an element in his subsequent preaching that had too much to do with its winsome power. (J. Wilbur Chapman, A Biography, Ford C. Ottman, Doubleday, Page & Co. Garden City, NY 1920, page 36).

He was licensed to preach by the Whitewater Presbytery, Ind. in 1882. His Call was given him by Old Saratoga Reformed Church, January 29, 1880. He was to receive \$1,000 a year and parsonage. Fort Miller give an extra \$300 per year. Although Chapman was a wonderful person and a great preacher, his stay here, according to the Consistory Minutes, was remarkably placid and uneventful. It is wise to remember, however, that sensitive and alert Clerks of Consistory have much to do with later estimates of a man. Careless, or inefficient clerks jot down very little. About the only thing recorded here in his favor: April 6, 1884 -Moved and carried that the following amounts be sent in aid of eight benevolent purposes: Foreign Missions \$10.00, Board of Publications \$13.00, Domestic Missions \$10.00, Board of Education \$4.00, Hope College \$2.00, Disabled Ministers Fund \$5.00, Church Bld. Fund \$3.00, Widow \$5.00 (See page 41, Minutes 1822-1930)

Schuylerville's reaction was quite different. While there, he took in over 100 members in his two year pastorate. All departments of church work were strengthened. After speaking of the high esteem in which they held him (when he was leaving), they say: "His labors were attended with a degree of efficiency and success never exceeded in the entire history of the Church."

Good, old Samuel Wells, Clerk of Schuylerville Consistory, whose testimonials are spiritual and literary masterpiece, adds this delightful count: Resolved: "That we desire in this connection to recognize the great assistance of Mrs. Chapman, which she has rendered in our church work, and the cheerful, earnest manner in which she has cooperated with her husband in promoting every good cause in our mind and intellectual, as well as religious." I wish I could have known Samuel Wells! He had a sense of Justice and property, of the fit of thing. He knew that every minister is only as great as his wife. We commend him for his insight and for words which came like pearls from his pen.

Next stop for Chapman was the First Reformed Church of Albany (1885-90). Then he became pastor of Bethany Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Pa. (1890-92). From 1892-1896 he engaged in evangelistic work abroad. 1896-1999 finds him again in Bethany Presbyterian, and 1899-1918 in the Fourth Presbyterian Church in New York City. While abroad, he was instrumental in bringing thousands of souls to Christ through his campaigns in Australia, England, Wales, Ireland and the United States. His mind was appealed by the great Charles M. Alexander, who had worked for a long while with the renowned Dr. R.A Torrey. These meetings were always advertised as: "The Chapman-Alexander Simultaneous Evangelistic Meetings.

Where does a man derive the power to make such an act upon the spirit of men? Rev. Edward Yates Hill, D.D. (See Wilbur Chapman, A Biography, page 12) declared: “The power lay not in clear thinking (although he was always lucid); not in accuracy and felicity of expression (in this he never failed); not in faultlessly delivery (let his manner was irrealatable) was the secret of his power. It was rather in that quality found in supreme measure in Christ, surprisingly spiritual and moral persuasiveness. Even when making no appeal he was appealing. He might be severe, yet his kindness gripped the heart. He might be terribly direct, yet his sympathy failed antagonize. HIS SWORD WAS BATHED IN HEAVEN.”

Someone once asked him for a rule to live by his answer reveals his candor and his penchant for truth: “It is a very difficult thing to make a rule for another to live by. The rule which governs my life is this: Anything that dims my vision of Christ, or takes away my taste for Bible study, or cramps me in my prayer life or makes Christian work difficult, its wrong for men and I must as a Christian, turn away from it.” (page 122).

Chapman’s last sermon was preached in the First Presbyterian Church at Jamaica, N.Y. I know this church very well, having had my first pastorate (Cambria Heights) only a few miles from there. (Rev. Andrew McGill was then minister). He died on Christmas Morning 1918 and was buried in Woodlawn. N.Y. Cemetery. These are the significant words on his tombstone:

J. WILBUR CHAPMAN
TO LIVE IS CHRIST...TO DIE IS GAIN

His lamented death in 1918 came less than one year after the completion at his term as Moderator at the General Assembly at the Presbyterian Church. U.S.A. For those interested in local history, be it known that, while Dr. Chapman was serving as an Evangelist in various parts of the world, his home was in Rensselaer, N.Y. (I am indebted to Dr. Carlyle Adams, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian at Albany, for the information in these two final paragraphs.)

REV. EDWARD A. McCULLUM
1886-1891

Very little is recorded of this preacher and business man in Corwin’s Manual (1902). Simply this: “McCullum, Edward - Schuylerville, 1886-91”. We know that he was a graduate of the Class of 1886 in New Brunswick and that he served both Schuylerville and Fort Miller from 1886-91. The Circumstances surrounding his coming to Old Saratoga are most interesting. A Call had been extended to the Rev. McCullum in 1885, prior to his graduation from New Brunswick. But McCullum had declined and, in doing so, he had put down the conditions under which he WOULD accept. It was a rather staggering proposition to the experienced business men of Old Saratoga. But the Church wanted him and they agreed. The Call was renewed and this time accepted.

Here are the terms that Rev. McCullum had insisted upon:

1. Salary to be \$1200.
2. Free use of the Parsonage.
3. An annual donation (to consist of gifts of food and money to the Pastor).
4. Sundays Vacation each year, with pay.
5. The privilege of supplying the Fort Miller Church on Sunday afternoons.

Truly, New Brunswick was turning out a new breed of ministers. As for Fort Miller, we have no reaction as to how they felt about being thrown-in to the bargain. We simply find McCullum, on April 10, 1886, presiding at a Consistory Meeting. The minutes say: “After preparatory lecture, Consistory met and opened with prayer by Rev. E.A. McCullum.”

Here are some additional extracts from our minutes which show what went on while McCullum preached, taught and guided our flock: July 2, 1890. The church having neglected to elect an organist, or to reinstate Miss Carrie Shepherd, the question was brought before Consistory as to what should be done, Miss Shepherd claiming that she still held the office of Chorister and Organist. After due deliberation, it was voted that Miss Shepherd retain the position as Chorister and Miss Fannie Weaver as

Organist until the Annual election of Officers on January 3, 1891. (On Jan. 3. 1891, Fannie Weaver was elected Chorister and Organist for one year.)

April 4, 1891. The Young Peoples Society of Christian Endeavor requested a change of meeting time from Sunday to some week night. No change! McCullum asked Old Saratoga for the dissolution of his pastorate on May 8, 1891. He was called to Fort Plain, N.Y. Faithful Samuel Wells penned the following testimonial: Resolved: "That after a pastorate of five years, we express our appreciation of his faithful and efficient service among us, his power and ability as a preacher and teacher of the Word, and his hearty sympathy and cooperation with every object for the advancement of the church and common good. The results of his faithful labors in this church and community bear witness to his earnestness and fidelity."

It was moved to spread a copy of these sentiments on the pages of the Schuylerville Standard and Christian Intelligencer, forerunner of the Church Herald, (Information derived from Old Saratoga Consistory Minutes (1881-1935) pages 53-55, 80. It isn't often that a minister declines a Call which he wants. McCullum, however, knew how to negotiate. He had a genuine sense of his own worth and, with finesse, outgeneraled men who were veterans in churchmanship and business dealings. And is a fact that nobody ever held his bargaining tactics against him. He really produced!

THE REV. JOHN HAINER
1892-1895

Shortly before the Rev. John Hainer was due to take over the reins, the Fort Miller Church decided it was time to overhaul. We find, on July 14, 1892, that W. Phillips was to receive \$350 for painting the church, and a committee was appointed (consisting of J. Shepherd, G.F. Kingsley and F. Hilton) to make necessary inside repairs up to \$50.00. They surely wanted to make a good impression on the new man. The Rev. John Hainer came to us from the Rockingham Conference of the Christian Church, and Saratoga Minutes tell us that he was born in Albany.

His Call stipulated that he receive:

1. \$1100 (\$100 less than McCullum!),
2. Free use of Parsonage,
3. Four Sundays Vacation,
4. Privilege of supplying the Fort Miller Church on Sunday afternoon.

The idea of an "Annual Donation" was abandoned. Our records show that this man was methodical and a careful workman. Finding that no deed for the Church property could be found, he appointed, June 30, 1894. John Wagman and Sheldon Viele to visit the County Clerk's Office to see if any record could be located. They reported, October 6, 1894, that there was no record of the Church property, but found that the property was in the name of Mr. Mrs. Daniel A. Bullard, Mr. & Mrs. John Wagman, and Mr. & Mrs. John Thorpe. Upon application to said parties for a title, they deeded for \$1.00 the said property to "The Ministers, Elders and Deacons of The Reformed Church of Fort Miller, N.Y.

At that time the Elders were: John Wagman, George Kingsley, J.H. Viele.

Deacons: James Shepherd, Wm. Guy, Frederick Hilton.

The deed was recorded in the County Clerk's Office, July 27, 1897, in LIBER 115 of DEEDS, at page 391.

After the report of the committee, they were discharged with thanks. Apparently Mrs. Hainer was quite musical, for she became organist both at Schuylerville and at Fort Miller. While he was minister here, candidates for Baptism were immersed, in real old-fashioned Baptist style, probably in the cove across the way from the Richard Kidwell's house. Through this he aroused the ire of Elder J.H. Viele, who twice voted against this form of baptism. The reason for Hainer's position on Baptism becomes clear when we realize that he belonged to the Christian Church. That was the name given his followers by Barton W. Stone (a Presbyterian minister in Kentucky) who entered into a partial union with the Campbell's Disciples of Christ) in 1832. Stone favored the name "Christian", Campbell the name "Disciples". Their beliefs were virtually the same. On the matter of baptism, this is what they say: "Repudiating any doctrine of 'baptismal regeneration to and insisting that there is no other prerequisite to registration than confession of faith with the whole heart in the personal, living Christ, they regard baptism by immersion 'as was of the items of the original divine system' and as 'commanded to order to the remission of sins'." (Handbook of

Denominations, Ablogdon Cokesbury, N.Y. 1951, page 70).

Rev. Hainer resigned from Old Saratoga on September 14, 1895, to take effect November 1, 1895 (this man considered the Church as well as himself, and gave them time to obtain a successor). He writes; "This resolve being decisive, your concurrence therein will be for our mutual interest and the ultimate good of our Master's Kingdom." His resignation was not accepted. They asked him to withdraw it. He writes them September 17, 1895. "Your action has been made known to me did I not feel it my duty to sunder the ties of our relationship, I would be strongly inclined to yield to your request. As it is, I can but again present you my resignation and kindly urge you to accept same." This time it was accepted. Resolutions were adopted, but the Clerk didn't enter them upon the minutes. (Saratoga Minutes 1881-1935, pp. 80, 138)

REV. LYMAN EDWYN DAVIS
1895-1896

Once in a while a church employs a minister for a very short time, who of indomitable drive and the sheer power or personality, gets important things done. Lyman Davis was such a man. A Titan! Certainly, he was one of the greatest ministers, educationally at least, who ever stood in our pulpit. Lyman Edwyn Davis, clergyman, editor author, was born in Perrysburg, near Toledo, Ohio, December 28, 1854. He was the son of John Wesley and Martha Powers Davis. He attended the University of Nebraska, 1872-73, and graduated from Adrian College, Mich. in 1877. He took his A.M. there in 1881. His LL.D. was awarded in 1912, his D.D. in Kansas City University, 1902. He married Ella H. Hood, October 23, 1877. Children of this marriage were: Laura (Mrs. Frederick Crisp), Marian (Mrs. Arthur Hugh Davis).

He was ordained to the ministry of the Methodist Protestant Church in 1877. Look at these pastorates: Tarrytown-on-Hudson: 1878; Rockville Center, N.Y.: 1882; Brooklyn, N.Y.: 1887; Middletown, N.Y.: 1890 Albany, N.Y.: 1893; Old Saratoga (and Fort Miller), N.Y.: 1895-96; Grace Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.: 1896-1913. He was President of the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church 1912-20; Editor Methodist Protestant Recorder, 1929. He studied social conditions in London, England, writing for American syndicates on "Life Studies of London". He was a member of the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Church of Christ in America, and of the National Reform Association. He was a member of the General War Time Commission of the Church and of the National Committee on Army and Navy Chaplains. In his busy life he found time to write five books:

Jonathan Twigg,
The Sceptre of Washington,
Social Doctrines of Christianity,
Democratic Methodism in America,
The Creed of Bethlehem.

His home was in Baltimore, Maryland, where he died August 30, 1930. Dr. Davis appears in our minutes on January 18, 1896. One month later, February 26, 1896, we read: "The Congregation, having met the previous evening for the purpose of considering the feasibility of building an ANNEX to the Church, Consistory convened for the same purpose, to decide what should be done. On motion it was unanimously voted to permit the same to the extent of funds supplied, and if such funds were not sufficient to finish the work, to stop until said funds were provided." The Building and Advisory Committee were: James Shepherd, Frederick Hilton, George H. Sanders, George C. Kingsley, Mrs. J.H. Viele, Mrs. Fred Hilton. Collector: Sheldon Viele.

On April 2, 1896, a call was extended to Rev. Davis by Bacon Hill. But also having received a call from Grace Church, Pittsburgh, Pa. he did not accept and also resigned from Old Saratoga (Schuylerville) and Fort Miller. The "Annex" in Fort Miller was finished at the end of the year, for -on December 29, 1896 -Sheldon Viele, Treasurer, was given power by Consistory to rent the "Church Parlors" for purposes that he considered were for the best interests of the church. At the same meeting it was voted that George H. Sanders and James Matt be a Committee to finish enclosing the sheds where horses were stabled when their owners attended church. Incidentally, these sheds still show the names of two horse owners and regular church goers: O.H. Pearsall and A. Van Antwerp.

REV. GEORGE ALBERT LUCKENBILL
1897-1898

According to the 1882-83 Catalogue of Ursinus College, In Collegeville, Pa. George Luckenbill was listed as a Junior in the Academy. His address at that time was Branch Dale, Schuylkill County. Pa. (his birth place). Apparently, he attended Ursinus for only one year. He must have made up the rest of his studies somewhere else, for he graduated from New Brunswick Seminary In 1892. He was licensed to preach by the Classis of New Brunswick. He supplied various churches between 1894 and 1900. One of these was Montville, N.J where he served from 1892-1894. He was Pastor here and at Bacon Hill from 1897 to 1898. The first record of Luckenbill as our pastor occurs in the minutes of March 21, 1897. At that meeting a proposal to enlarge the Consistory was defeated. On July 3. 1897. Elder George Kingsley reported that Classis had given permission to our church to employ the Rev. G.A. Luckenbill as Pastor for the ensuing six months. Sheldon Viele was elected Treasurer at the January 5. 1898, meeting and “given power to appoint an assistant”. Apparently, he was getting on in years. April 2, 1898. Elders G.C. Kingsley and J.H. Shepherd comprised a committees to consult with Schuylerville Reformed Church in regard to obtaining a pastor. April 10, 1898, the committee reported that arrangements for supply preaching were not yet completed, but that they had secured terms from Rev. J.H. Brandow, Schuylerville’s pastor. Apparently, Mr. Brandow wanted too much money, for on June 8. 1898, Consistory voted to offer Rev. George A. Luckenbill “the same as he now receives for his services until July 1, 1898.”

That entry is the last on our books. No mention is made of Rev. Luckenbill’s death, which, at least to one member of our church meant severe bereavement. The member was Miss Carrie Shepherd, aunt of our own James Petit and Ruth Murray, and bride to-be of the Rev. Luckenbill. It was on a lovely October morning n 1900. Mr. Luckenbill was in a happy frame of mind. He had Just received a Call from the growing Reformed Church in Glen Rock N.J. that would allow him to get married. Perhaps, he was thinking too much of the future and not enough of the present; at any rate, he did not watch where he was going and was struck by a train at the Erie Railroad Station in Glen Rock and was killed. (Glen Rock is the only Railroad Station I know where two clergymen were killed. Dr. Victor W. Simons, my Greek Professor both in Rutgers and New Brunswick Seminary, one of the finest men I ever knew, also lost his life at the same station). Jefferson Davis, years later, bought somewhere and gave to our church the lovely bookcase Rev. Luckenbill had purchased as a present for Miss Shepherd. It is now in Pastor’s Study in the Parsonage. After Rev. Luckenbill left and the church had a number of supply ministers, there was much talk of forming “alliances” with other churches. On August 28, 1898, a motion was passed that Elder George Kingsley inform the Consistory of Bacon Hill that we cannot form an “alliance” with any church until Classis convenes in October. In February 1900, Consistory discussed forming an “alliance” with Gansevoort. Motion made and carried “that we continue with supplies until Classis convenes.”

Some solid work was being done here, however, for we read on July 1, 1899, that “Church buildings have been insured in Church Insurance Association of Rochester, N.Y. for \$3,500 apportioned as follows: Church and Annex: \$3,000, Sheds: \$250, Chairs: \$50, Lamps: \$50, Stoves: \$50, Dishes: \$40, Chairs: \$40, Cushions: \$20 - The Consistory now expressed a genuine interest in Rev. Edward C. Wiley.

REV. EDWARD CARROLL WILEY
1900-1902

The discussions before Rev. Wiley is coming make interesting reading. April 17. 1900, the Gansevoort Church visited us to see if we couldn’t work out a joint arrangement in salary for Mr. Wiley. Elder Kingsley was instructed to offer him \$350, for one year’s service, two sermons each Sabbath, he to make his home in Fort Miller. May 21. 1900, Classis was asked for aid to help with Mr. Wiley’s salary. May 24, 1900, since Classis replied: “Not feasible to help”. A motion was made to accept Gansevoort’s proposition to house Rev. Wiley, and we accept him for one year as supply at \$5 per Sabbath. Motion carried. May 27, 1900, Motion made-and seconded that we rescind the motion carried at our last meeting. A new motion was made that we pay Rev. Wiley \$350 and furnish him transportation for preaching in Gansevoort. Motion carried. Motion made that it be left with Mr. Wiley to decide which offer he will accept. It appears that he came to Fort Miller, for I found no trace of him in the Gansevoort Minutes.

Edward Carroll Wiley was born June 11, 1858, in Dorset, Vt. His parents were Samuel and Eglah (Ives) Wiley. He married Louise Gilchrist of Northumberland N.Y. in 1902 (deceased 1952). No close survivors. At Williams College where he received his B.A. in 1881, he was Vice President of Philogian and a member of the YMCA. He attended Union Theological Seminary in New York, but graduated from Auburn Seminary in 1889. He was Principal of Argyle Academy, Washington County, N.Y. until 1886, when he began his studies for the Ministry. He was Pastor of the Fort Miller Reformed Church 1900-02. He served the Congregational Church in Knoxborough, N.Y. and Scotchtown, N.Y. Later he became Pastor of the Congregational Church in Wabhams, N.Y. He retired in 1922 and moved to Johnstown, N.Y. where he supplied several parishes as Supply. At the time of his death (Sept. 23, 1958, at Johnstown) he was Williams College oldest alumnus, being 100 years old. On page 28, of the November, 1957 Williams Alumni Review, is a picture of Rev. Wiley, a slight, handsome man, with a cute mustache.

Rev. Wiley spent most of his boyhood in North Granville, near the Vermont border, and remembered the "Boys in Blue" training in a shed behind the North Granville Hotel. His graduation was saddened by the assassination of President J.A. Garfield, who was en route to Williams College for his 25th reunion. (See Williams College Alumni Review November 1958, Vol. 51, page 31. The heading "Obituaries 1881" supplied this material.) Rev. Wiley must have done well here, for we find, on March 8, 1901, that Elder George C. Kingsley and Deacon Fred Hilton were a committee to consult him in regard to his staying for another year.

After Rev. Wiley left us for the Congregational Church in Knoxborough, N.Y. Fort Miller came across the Rev. M. McTice, who just happened to be available. They invited him to preach the next two Sundays, but as thing turned out he supplied our church for nine months, until arrangements were made to obtain the services of the Rev. B. B. Davis. Unfortunately, all my attempts to find out more about this excellent Supply Minister were in vain. He was not a member of the Reformed Church in America nor do Princeton Seminary's Presbyterian records have any trace of him.

REV. EDWIN EMERSON DAVIS
1903-1904

Edwin Emerson Davis graduated from Princeton Seminary, N.J in 1903. He was born in New York City, February 14, 1872, attended Lane Seminary 1900-1902 and Princeton 1902-03. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Cleveland, June 24, 1903. He came to us and Bacon Hill right after his ordination and stayed until he became pastor of the Mayflower Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, Ohio, (1904-05). In 1910 he became pastor of the New York Avenue Reformed Church in Newark, N.J., and from 1917 to 1923 supplied the Buskirk, N.Y Reformed Church. Finally he served the Athens, N.Y. Reformed Church 1921-1940. He died July 24, 1944.

According to the helpful James S. Irvine, Assistant Librarian at Princeton Theological Seminary, Mr. Davis might already have supplied our church while at Princeton. At any rate, our minutes show that, on April 19, 1903, a motion was made that \$300 be paid Rev. E.E. Davis for one year in union with the Bacon Hill Church. Motion carried. (Whether Bacon Hill actually participated in this arrangement, is not clear. Their minutes do not show it.) May 10, 1903. Request by Miss Caroline Shepherd to have permission to place new round elbows and collars on church stove pipes where they enter chimney, two suspension rods and enamels. Request granted. March 20, 1904, Moved: "That we repair sheds, chimney and platforms". April 9, 1904, Motion made: "That Ladies Mite Society (the Ladies Mite Society began under the Ministry of the Rev. John A. Hainer, organizing date: July 9, 1892) be given permission to use their money for repairing the inside of the church and painting outside as far as money will permit GA. Sanders and Frank Petit were a committee to cooperate with them.

For one year's work, the Rev. Edwin Emerson Davis did remarkably well!

REV. JACOB VAN ESS
1904-1908

Jacob Van Ess was born in North Holland, Mich., on June 8, 1877. He graduated from Hope College in 1898 and from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1901. He was licensed by the Classis of Wisconsin in 1901 and ordained to the Gospel Ministry

on August 7, 1902. He was the student supply of Immanuel Mission, Irving Park, Chicago, Ill. for six months in 1901. He served the following churches: Knox and Thompson's Lake, Albany, N.Y. 1902-04; Bacon Hill and Fort Miller. NY. 1904-08; Schoharie, NY. 1909-11; Delmar. NY 1911-21. He was Synodical Missionary for Particular Synod of Albany from 1921 to 1926. Then he served Catskill, NY. 1926-40; Mount Pleasant, NY. 1940-43; War Emergency Field Secretary of Board of Domestic Missions 1943-45; Resident Protestant Chaplain. Hew York Vocational Institution at West Coxsackie, NY. 1945-47; West Copake. NY 1947-54; Leeds. NY. 1954-56.

Rev. Van Ess was Vice President of General Synod in 1925. He was a member of General Synod's Committee on Pastoral Exchange and Supply, Eastern Section, for five years and a member of the Board of Superintendents of Western Seminary for one term. He received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity from Central College, Pella, Iowa, in 1934. He died on December 24, 1959 at Coxsackie, NY. Funeral services were held in the First Reformed Church. West Coxsackie, NY. Officiating clergymen were: David Jurgens, West Ghent Reformed Church; Benjamin Hoffman, First Reformed Church, Hudson, NY; and John Buyer, Protestant Chaplain of the New York State Vocational Institution, West Coxsackie, NY. He was survived by his widow. Mrs. Mildred Van Hoesen Van Ess; Paul R. Van Ess, Ph.D. Berkeley. Calif.; Miss Helen Van Ess, Catskill, NY; Mrs. T.V. Buckwalter Jr., Pittsburgh, Pa. and six grandchildren.

While serving Bacon Hill, Rev. Van Ess was always talking about "spiritual concerns". This represented his real thrust in the ministry. Everywhere Jake Van Ess went, he was liked, respected. When he left a parish, everyone was sorry. He came here as Stated Supply at a salary of \$1300 per year. The date was June 26, 1904. In the first month he served us he asked Consistory to help one Rev. Black, of North Easton, whose entire library had been destroyed by fire. The offering amounted to \$8.00. On July 11, 1904, Messrs. Sanders, Lauder, and Kingsley were made an effort to confer with Canal authorities and to settle the claim for damages done to our church by Barge Canal construction. March 24, 1907. Motion made: "We grant Ladies Mite Society the privilege to change the kitchen and put in sink for ice cream freezers". Carried. Hard, second thoughts prevailed, however, for later on we read this motion: "Motion to rescind previous motion. The Ladies Mite Society "is to report plans to Consistory" before approval is granted. Jacob Van Ess was greatly interested in Missions. Everywhere he went he introduced duplex envelopes to help that cause along. Few men have had a wider experience than he, and all he experienced was grist to his preacher's mill. One of the most beautiful tributes ever paid any minister was written at Bacon Hill when Van Ess resigned to go to Schoharie, NY.

The Clerk of Consistory wrote: Resolved: "That we hereby record our appreciation of his kind and genial fellowship, his strong character and faithful service. He has shown himself a man of true and honest purpose, of pure mind, sound judgment, of highest principle, ever ready to do whatever he could for the advancement of our Master's Kingdom. We feel that not only our church, but also our community will lose one who has always stood for its best interests. Resolved: "This we record our regret that the pastoral tie must now be severed for our relations have always been most cordial." Henry C. Peck, Clerk.

REV. DAVID CRAWFORD WEIDNER
1909-1913

David Crawford Weidner was born in West Shokan NY, March 27, 1877. He graduated from Rutgers University in 1899, and from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1902. He was ordained by the Classis of Montgomery, June 4, 1902. He served the following churches: Haganan, NY 1902-05; Cranesville, NY (Stated Supply) 1903-05; Schuylerville, NY, 1905-13; Fort Miller, NY (Stated Supply) 1909-13; Park Church, Jersey City, NJ. 1913-15; Glen Rock, NJ. 1915-19; Rochelle Park, NJ. (Stated Supply) 1918-19; Rochelle Park, NJ. 1919-22; New Hyde Park, NY. 1922-42. He retired in 1942, being made Pastor Emeritus in New Hyde Park. He also served as Stated Supply in Bloomingdale, NY. 1943, and in St. Remy, 1943. He died in Kingston, NY, May 5, 1955, at the age of 78. The funeral was held in the Old Dutch Church, Kingston, NY, with Revs. Arthur E. Oudemool and Joseph Carlin officiating. Burial was in New Brunswick NJ. May 9, 1955. He was survived by his wife, Meta A. Roes Weidner, and two daughters: Mrs. Ruth W. Patitz and Mrs. Harriet W. Snyder, and two sons, Schuyler E. and Harold E. Weidner.

When, on March 28, 1909, Rev. Weidner was engaged here as Stated Supply, his salary was \$25 per month. He was to do preaching and pastoral work. On October 3, 1909, Fort Miller asked Classis to continue Mr. Weidner on as Stated Supply until

May 1, 1910. It seems, that this was not the last extension requested and granted, for Rev. Weidner stayed on till 1913, when he also left Schuylerville. It was during the years of his "Supply" that the following took place: On September 11, 1910 a motion was made and carried that Frank Germain, Treasurer, be instructed to pay the Chairman of the Building Committee the money received from Sundstrum and Stratton for damage to the church (probably due to canal blasting). Sheldon Viele died in 1911. This devoted man, who had loved Fort Miller with every breath and had given much of his time and labor and -because of his careful stewardship -had been thought of as poor, left the church two buildings: Our Manse and our Tenant House. Motion was made in Consistory that the Church pay \$1 each year for the care of his grave in Riverside Cemetery. Motion carried. Alvin R. Hatch was elected Deacon to replace him. In 1911, Caroline Shepherd was elected Chorister and Organist for one year. She served in these positions until 1924, when Mrs. John Davison became Organist. On May 16 1911. Rev. Weidner introduced a request from Rev. A.Z. Burger that Fort Miller unite with Bacon Hill and Gansevoort in employing him as Classical Missionary. The following action occurred: Resolved: "That inasmuch as this church has always been self-supporting, and the Consistory does not feel that they should be under obligation to the Board of Domestic Missions for any financial assistance, they feel that they cannot go into the proposed arrangement with Bacon Hill and Gansevoort churches, but desire to continue the present arrangement."

-George H. Sanders, Clerk

On March 3, 1912, Elder George Kingsley was defeated for office by Fred Lee, Sr. The vote was 12:9. Fred Lee, not wanting to hurt Kingsley, declined to serve. However, Kingsley was angry and asked that his name be dropped from the Church Register. On January 26, 1913, he was granted a Letter of Dismissal to the Methodist Church in Fort Edward. On January 1, 1913, a motion was made and carried to permit the Church Building to be used by the Grange, at a rent of \$4 per month. The Grange agreed to take care of the Hall, "except" for Janitor Services (If Janitor service was excluded, what care did the Grange provide?) On July 27, 1913, motion was made that Frank Petit be made Secretary and treasurer of the Sheldon Viele Fund, that he lease the property, collect rents, and keep accounts of all monies paid out, subject to the approval of Consistory.

Down at Schuylerville, Rev. Weidner was having trouble about which organizations should meet in his church. A proposed Prohibition Political Meeting lost out 3:2, while The Law and Order League was permitted to meet. It was determined that the church should continue to pay the minister's telephone bill and that all ecclesiastical records be housed in Pastor's library. The suggestion of Rev. Weidner that the Congregation unite with the Episcopalians in the farewell sermon of the Rev. Mr. Hawkins was laid on the table. It was during Rev. Weidner's ministry that Samuel Wells, Esq. lawyer, Reformed Churchman, Mason, Writer of imperishable tributes to many pastors "fell on sleep". A magnificent tribute was written by Rev. Weidner, expressing the Church's appreciation for his wonderful services.

No testimonial appears on the Old Saratoga Minutes concerning Rev. Weidner, but we can tell from the record that he was ecumenically minded, businesslike, and thoroughly Christian in his attitudes. I knew Dave Weidner while he was at New Hyde Park, NY. He enjoyed the good will of the entire community and the deep affection of his Congregation.

REV. CHARLES WALTER KINNEY
1919-1926

Rev. Charles Walter Kinney was born at South Berlin, Rensselaer County, NY. on June 5. 1858 and died at Schuylerville, NY on April 11, 1931. He was educated at the old Claverack Institute and for several years taught school at Alexandria Bay. NY. Later he became Secretary of the Y.M.C.A. at Cohoes, NY, where, under the influence of Rev. J. Paschal Strong, Pastor of the Reformed Church of Cohoes, he decided to enter the Ministry. He was licensed by the Classis of Saratoga in 1888 and, in 1889, became pastor of the Reformed Church at Westerlo. NY. where he remained until 1893 when he went to Shokan and Shandaken until 1893; then to St. Johnsville (1893-99), then to Hobart NY. Presbyterian Church (1899-1906); again in the Reformed Church at Mohawk, NY. until 1911, being also Stated Supply at Fort Herkimer, NY (1909-1911); Schoharie. NY (1911-12.); Saratoga (Schuylerville) and Fort Miller in 1919-1928, and at Schuylerville alone from 1928 until his death in 1931.

He was survived by his wife and three daughters: Mrs. Lloyd Ecker of Utica, NY, Mrs. Harold Curtis and Mrs. Joseph Glass, both of Schuylerville, NY. I asked Mrs. Joseph Glass to write a short sketch of her father's life, and I am delighted to bring it to you: "My father was certainly a man called to the ministry. It was his mother's prayer and great desire that one day her son would become a minister. As a small lad, the woodpile furnished the pews and the congregation to whom he frequently

preached. Although he stammered, his two older sisters worked with love and patience to help him overcome this defect.

“One day going home from school, his pastor called him into the parsonage for a heart to heart talk which resulted in the first stage of his becoming a minister. This godly man began tutoring him. After finishing school, father taught school in Alexandria Bay, NY. for a while, before going into Y.M.C.A. work in Cohoes, NY. He and my mother set up house-keeping in Waterford, NY. and had their first child. At this period in his life a decision had to be made either to continue with Y.M.C. A. work in New York City or become the pastor of a small church in Westerlo, NY., a little village some 14 miles from a railroad. He heeded the call to the ministry. After a short pastorate there, the family moved to Shokan, later to St. Johnsville, Hobart, Mohawk, Scoharie and Schuylerville all in New York State. When in Mohawk, Dad had the use of a neighbor’s horse and carriage to drive to his afternoon services in Fort Herkimer. In order to preach in Fort Miller, he took the trolley Sunday afternoons. Thus 43 years of service were spent in a humble way, forgetting self and thinking only of others until his death in Schuylerville in 1931.

“Dad was not only a minister but a devoted husband and father of three girls, giving of his time and strength to make a happy home. With the small salaries of those yester years, it was almost a necessity to have a garden to help with the food supply, with flowers added for beauty. In one pastorate, a yearly donation social was held in the parsonage where gifts of food and money were given as a supplement to his salary.

“Often Dad’s sermons were inspired by the beauty and wonder of nature. He lifted his eyes unto the hills from which came his help, or he listened to the voice of God in the song of a bird or music of a babbling brook. My mother once said: “I have never known anyone who had the right Bible verse for any occasion better than your father.” He also had a certain way of speaking extemporaneously, be it a pleasantry or a serious talk. I especially recall his prayers. They were not just words but sincere desires and thankfulness from his heart. “Years flew by with the usual ups and downs, Joys and sorrows for this tired-out man until God took him home to rest.”

While at Fort Miller, Rev. Kinney was once given a present of \$50.00 and on another occasion (Dec. 21, 1919) his salary was increased \$100. When a group of dissidents wanted to use the Church Parlors for their weekly meetings, Rev. Kinney said: “No foreign doctrines shall be taught here!” He delegated work nicely. In 1924, Henry De Groot had charge of church collections; Leslie Orr publicity and church notices; F. J. Petit new lights for the church; A.R. Hatch committee to clean church. In August 1924, J.F. Petit was appointed to inquire into the possibility of lighting the church by electricity. In October 1924, Henry De Groot reported that hard wood floors in church would cost \$493, while J.F. Petit said gas lamps would cost \$45. Sermon topics and time of services were to be sent to Post-Star to help increase attendance. In 1925, permission was granted by our insurance company to permit school classes to meet in church. In 1926, apparently due to a scare, “insurance is to be raised at once to \$6,000.” In 1927 Consistory meetings were scheduled “once every two months” instead of once a month as heretofore. In the same year a contract was given to the N.Y. Power and Lighting Corporation for new lights at a cost of \$240, and on March 5, 1928, electric lights were on in the church for the first time!

On May 9, 1928, the following resignation was read to the Fort Miller Consistory: “Dear Brethren: I herewith tender my resignation from the Office of Ministerial Supply of the Reformed Church of Fort Miller, NY., said resignation to take effect immediately, or at the convenience of the Consistory. -Charles Walter Kinney- The actual resignation went into effect June 1, 1928. The following resolution adopted at the time of his death by Old Saratoga Reformed Church voiced also the sentiments of all Fort Miller people:

“Whereas the Reformed Church of Saratoga at Schuylerville, NY. has suffered the loss of its spiritual leader in the death of Rev. Charles W. Kinney, who ministered for 18 years to the welfare of his people in a manner that endeared him to their hearts, and whose daily life was an inspiration to all with whom he came in contact, therefore BE IT RESOLVED: That we testify to the faithful service he performed throughout a long pastorate; his joyful participation in our pleasures; the solace of his comforting words and kindly presence in our times of sorrow; his wise counsel, and the benefit of his wide experience as a guide in all phases of life’s endeavors. That we sympathize deeply with his family in their affliction, and commend them to the God he revered and served for a strengthened faith in the wisdom of His decrees that shall sustain them in their time of need and turn their thoughts to the blessedness of the ultimate reunion in the heavenly home, according to the sacred promises of Holy Writ. That we glory in the assurance that he merited the reward promised to the good and faithful servant when he

shall appear before his Maker in the final judgment. That a copy be sent to his wife and daughters, that it be inscribed upon our official minutes and that a copy be sent to the Christian Intelligencer.” Rev. Charles Walter Kinney was a sincere and earnest minister of the Gospel and was a success in all his fields of labor.

REV. JACOB SERVIS LARUE
1928-1955

The Rev. Jacob Servis LaRue was born on October 16, 1883 in Ringoes, NJ. Having attended Pennington Seminary, Lafayette College, Princeton University and Princeton Theological Seminary, Mr. LaRue was ordained by the Presbytery of Morris and Orange in the Ridgeview Presbyterian Church at West Orange, NJ. in October 1914. Among his pastorates were an assistanceship in the Central Presbyterian Church of Orange, NJ. from 1911 to 1912; a pastorate in a group of churches known as “Cascade Parish” in the State of Washington from 1915-1918; a pastorate in Boyle Memorial Center. A church and social settlement in St. Louis, Mo. In 1919 he was called to the First Presbyterian Church of Schenectady as Director of Religious Education. He was installed as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Hudson Falls, NY, on February 24, 1921. Seven years later he accepted the call also as Stated Supply of the Reformed Church of Fort Miller.

When Mrs. Warren Coon, the efficient secretary of the Hudson Falls Presbyterian Church, showed me a picture of Rev. LaRue, he appeared strong, cordial, friendly, yet with a wistful look in his eyes. My estimate of him was confirmed by “The Record” and by friends who knew him well. Consider what he did: He followed one of the “greats” in the Church of Christ, The Rev. Charles Dor Kellogg. It speaks highly of both men that they got along so well. He began the Boy Scout Movement in Hudson Falls. He held the first Daily Vacation Bible School there. He had a vivid sense of history (maybe that’s why Fort Miller appealed to him) and was a member of the Washington County Historical Society.

He was a great camper, excelling in swimming and skiing. He loved gardening and raised his own vegetables. He fixed his own car, when it needed repairs. Always he was accompanied by a great German Shepherd. His sermons were folksy, down to earth. He had natural humor and wit. When his wife left him, he carried on bravely, rearing three sons: Robert, John and Mark, doing the cooking and washing himself. On Monday, August 20, 1956, following a long illness, he passed away at his home, 16 Maple Street, Hudson Falls, thus terminating a pastorate of 35 years with the First Presbyterian Church there. (Material is derived from “A Biography of Rev. J. Servis LaRue, put out by the Session, following his death.) A Resolution passed by the session and signed by Dana M. King, Clerk, recognized and appreciated the splendid service by Mr. LaRue to this community over a period of 35 years as a spiritual leader, devoted pastor, youth counsellor, patriotic citizen, and tireless worker in the interests of the whole community. At the entrance to the Hudson Falls Presbyterian Church House is this plaque:

THIS CHURCH HOUSE IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF
REV. J. SERVIS LARUE, PASTOR, 1921-1956.

While guiding the life of the Fort Miller Church, the Rev. LaRue had the driveway paved, chimneys fixed and the church redecorated. Walls were painted, the floor was made of strong white oak, cushions were upholstered. Under his leadership, our Vereengheit Circle was organized on October 18, 1929. The name for this group was chosen by Mrs. Rena De Groot, mother of our Henry De Groot, former elder, who being of Dutch descent thought this the proper name to demonstrate that we all have to stand together in unity, if we want to be strong and get things done. Thus our women have been banded together under the motto “Each for the other and all together tor the church” ever since, not only in fellowship and fun, but in helping the church maintain its interior and exterior look and in helping charitable and missionary projects in our neighborhood and within the R.C.A.

On February 2, 1930 a great Day of Rededication was held. Rev. Kinney spoke on: What This Church Has Accomplished; Rev. F.C. Scoville: What is The Dutch Reformed Church Doing For The Kingdom of Christ? Rev. LaRue brought his paid quartette from Hudson Falls that day and spoke on: Rededicating Our Church To Future Service. During the time of Rev. LaRue’s ministry, Fort Miller enjoyed several student supply ministers tor various summers:

1. Dr. Eugene Osterhaven, summer of 1943, now Professor of Systematic Theology in Western Theological

- Seminary, Holland, Michigan.
2. Rev. Kenneth Leestma, summer of 1950, now Pastor of Eldorado Park Community Church, Long Beach, California.
 3. Rev. William Bodamer, summer of 1955.

The Rev. Osterhaven stayed with the Leslie Orr family, and Rev. Leestma with the Kenneth Germain who became as fond of him, as if he were their own son. Rev. Bodamer was also Rev. LaRue's assistant in Hudson Falls and was with him at the time of his death. They say in Hudson Falls: "Rev. LaRue could make you a church member before you crossed from one end of a room to the other." His only known weakness was carelessness in keeping church records. But no doubt, when the Master of Accounts welcomed him into His presence, He said: "Jacob, I forgive you for your poor recording, because you were so busy comforting people and winning souls to Christ." A lot of our people grew up under Rev. LaRue, not knowing that they belonged to the Reformed Church In America. They thought they were Presbyterians. But seldom has a Supply Pastor done more for a church than Rev. LaRue. He was gifted with prodigious strength to carry on ministries in both churches for such a long period of time. With heart and voice we must say concerning him: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord."

REV. C. RUSSELL DOHERTY
1956-1958

C. Russell Doherty was born on October 7, 1919, and attended public school in Philadelphia. His undergraduate work was done at Drexel University and Temple University In Philadelphia, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY. and Teachers College, Castleton, VT. where he received his B.S. degree In 1956. He attended the Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia, receiving his B.D. in 1956 also. He served the North Argyle United Presbyterian Church 1951-1958, and the Fort Miller Reformed Church as Stated Supply 1956 - 1958. He has been Pastor of the Wynnewood United Presbyterian Church in Wynnewood, PA. since 1958. He married Dorothy May Heck, January 25, 1945, In Louisville. KY. While serving here, their family consisted of two children: Karen, born March 1947 (deceased March 1959) and Thomas, born August 1949. Another daughter was born to them later In August 1964. They named her Dorothy after Mrs. Doherty. They also have two foster children, Charlotte Houseberg (born May 1955) and Helene Houseberg (born May 1960). Our minutes show that James Petit and Henry De Groot were appointed to interview Rev. Doherty about serving our church for a period as Stated Supply. He accepted.

These are some of the things that transpired during Rev. Doherty's ministry: Elder Kenneth Germain's suggestion that Fort Miller pay Its share of expense for the Released Time School at Schuylerville was approved (Sept. 2, 1956).

Elder Leslie Orr resigned after 40 years of distinguished service. Bernhard Pett was selected to fill his place Jan. 4, 1957. He and his wife are still among our most faithful members. A resolution of respect for the Rev. J. Servis LaRue was authorized as was a letter of appreciation to Rev. William Bodamer, for his helpful services while Rev. LaRue was 11. (Jan. 4, 1957) By motion of Kenneth Germain, Rev. Doherty's salary was raised to \$1000 per year.

Motion was passed that our church be kept open during the month of August (July 3, 1957). Bathroom and running water were installed in the Tenant House and cold water in the Manse. The Vereengheit Circle gave \$500 toward this improvement. The church itself later added \$300 to complete the job. The rent of the Tenant House was raised to \$25 per month (November 29, 1957). On January 7, 1958, a delegation came from North Argyle United Presbyterian Church, consisting of: Roscoe Story, Howard Gillis, and James Black, to ask us to increase Rev. Doherty's salary. Result: We added \$200 plus \$132 in pension money. This brought our responsibility to \$1332 per year. On April 4, 1958, 21 church members were received, mostly young people. In a lovely letter of May 28, 1971, the Rev. Doherty remarks: "I remember quite well the large Communicant's Class in the Spring of 1958. I think there were 20 in the class, which up to that time was the largest ever at Fort Miller."

In this same letter, Rev. Doherty writes: "I am not sure, but I believe I was the one who convinced the Fort Miller people that they could support their own pastor. I told them, though that they would have to get out and ring door bells and get into the back country. I'm sure they did this and have enjoyed some independence during these past 12 years." On October 31, 1958, the Classis of Saratoga suggested that Gansevoort and Fort Miller together have a full-time pastor, serving both churches.

Due, no doubt, to Rev. Doherty's confidence, most of the men at that meeting felt that Fort Miller was almost ready for a full-time pastor, "with the possibility of sharing him with another church", but no action was taken. On December 12, 1958, Mrs. Jefferson (Edith) Davis offered the church two beautiful brass candelabra in memory of her husband. This offer was gratefully accepted. Rev. Doherty was a dedicated, committed servant of his Master. Mrs. Doherty, a delightful person, brought gladness through a winsome personality. In their pastorate at Fort Miller, they experienced the Joys and sorrows that go with serving God's people. But they have firm friendships here and hold many fond memories of the time spent with our people. Their ministry gave a much needed infusion of confidence to our officials and members of the congregation.

THE CHURCH ON ITS OWN AGAIN.

I have heard it said, since coming to Fort Miller, that our Church was never wholly on its own, until the coming of Rev. Vedder. This is not the case. It is true as far back as people can remember, but history reveals additional information. Denny Ray Thomas was on his own here, even though it was for a very short time. So was Joel Wood, former missionary to the Choctaws and Tuscaroras, James Stebbins was on his own here, twice! And so was long-lived Edward Carroll Wiley. It is true that we were often yoked with Argyle, Old Saratoga (Schuylerville), Hudson Falls Presbyterian, North Argyle Presbyterian, and particularly Northumberland (Bacon Hill), but at least five other times in our history, we went it alone. It was accomplished by faith, prayer, true worship and generous giving.

Thus came the year 1959, and Fort Miller got ready for the sixth time for a full-time minister. A committee, consisting of Mrs. Kenneth Germain, Mrs. Rachel Foss, Mr. Malcolm Sanders, and Mr. James Petit, was selected to "prepare and make plans to change the pulpit of the church to match its colonial self; also to paint the vestibule and the inside of the church." These plans were later approved at a Congregational Meeting. Not only the Church was made ready, the Parsonage, too, was put in shape. To accomplish this, Elder Henry De Groot, with approval of the Consistory, was authorized to borrow \$2,000 from the Fort Edward Bank to begin the extended work. According to Henry De Groot, the total cost came to \$2,600.46, and the money was paid back very quickly. No action was officially taken yet to obtain a minister but "Communion is to be held at Easter, if we can find an ordained minister" our minutes read. Rev. Charles W. Smith from Clarksville, NY, 72 years old, showed an interest in coming to our church. He was rejected, probably because of his advanced age.

As the school year came to a close, the church approached Dr. Stephen James, President of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, for student candidates. Not many were available, and laymen kept preaching in our pulpit. But during the summer months, one student minister came here and did excellent work. He was Raymond Vedder born May 14, 1933, in Schenectady, NY., who had a B.A. degree from Hope College and was working for his B.D. at New Brunswick. A note declares: "It is agreed that our summer pastor shall receive a married man's salary; his light bill shall be paid, and 8¢ per mile shall be given him for car service in field work. "

The Annual Congregational Meeting on February 5, 1960, presided over by Rev. Harold Goldzung, Pastor at Old Saratoga (Schuylerville), was a most confusing one. The congregation had three main candidates for the pulpit. At first, Rev. Vedder, known by many, led in the balloting, but was unable to muster a majority, running neck and neck with the Rev. Robert C. Woodward. Since the second balloting had similar results, they were both eliminated, and the name of the Rev. Benjamin LeFevre, the third candidate, was put before the congregation. Since he got more votes than any of the previous two candidates, a Call was extended to him. But Rev. LeFevre, in the meantime, had accepted another Call to go to Glen, NY., and our Call was turned down by him. It was then that the sentiment swung back to Rev. Vedder.

REV. RAYMOND JACOB VEDDER

1960-1963

Rev. Raymond Jacob Vedder was born in Schenectady, NY, May 14, 1933, son of Clifford Vedder. He obtained his B.A. degree at Hope College, 1954, and his B.D. from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1960. He was licensed by the Classis of Schenectady in 1960 and ordained by the Classis of Saratoga, also in 1960. He served Fort Miller as student pastor during the summer of 1959 and became its full-time minister in the Spring of 1960. He stayed with us until 1963, when he transferred to Claverack, NY. where he died shortly thereafter. On March 25, 1960, a motion was made and passed by Consistory, that a

Call be extended to Rev. Raymond Vedder. This vote was unanimous. The Call specified as Rev. Vedder's duties to "be Pastor and Teacher, preach the Word of God, administer the Sacraments, work with youth and do all customary service required of a Gospel Minister." His remuneration was: \$4000 per year as salary, \$515 per year expense allowance, 8% of the above to the contributory annuity fund, four weeks paid vacation, free use of the parsonage. At the same meeting Malcolm (Mac) Sanders offered to serve as sexton at no charge, which was gratefully accepted.

Since quite a number of items, such as a refrigerator and washing machine, were still missing from Rev. Vedder's future living quarters, a permanent Parsonage Committee was selected on May 27, 1960, to help the Consistory with any needs which might arise through having a minister and family in the Manse. This committee consisted of Louise Rice, Northern part of Parish, Martha Carpenter and Ruth Murray, Fort Miller proper (island), Betty Ellis, lower Fort Miller, Mary Larmon, Bald Mountain, Evelyn Lauder, Greenwich. Thus the Rev. "Ray" Vedder and his wife Lorna began their ministry in Fort Miller in the Spring of 1960.

At his first meeting with the Board of the Church, Rev. Vedder explained the duties of Consistories, which they all accepted. It was further agreed that the candles should be lighted for each church worship service (and not just on special occasions). Upon Rev. Vedder's request, two phones were installed in the parsonage, one to reach locally the north-end parishioners (Fort Edward Line), and the other for the south-end members (Schuylerville, Greenwich, Bald Mountain Lines). With this done, the Rev. Vedder instituted a Prayer Chain which, according to Cathleen Humiston "had a good response among members, and I believe it was through it that several of our members recovered when death was imminent." But the Prayer Chain could not prevent the sudden death by automobile accident of Deacon Walter Lapitsky in August of 1960. It could only pray that his young widow and his three children, with God's help, would find strength to bear his death. Walter Lapitsky had been a faithful member of the Fort Miller congregation, who put in long hours working for the church. His untimely death was a blow to everyone who loved him. A letter sent to his widow, Joan, revealed genuine sorrow, but also rugged Christian faith: "Walter was a humble and dedicated man, both to his family and to the Church, the body of Christ, of which he was and still is part." And time marched on.

On October 18, 1960, the annual budget of \$7,884 was accepted by vote of 4:2 at Consistory. Classis was overtured, on November 25, 1960, to permit the election of officers from congregational nomination and election to Consistorial nomination and congregational election. This was granted. Two dozen booklets entitled: "Membership in the Reformed Church" were ordered. Bulletins with a picture of our church on the front cover were acquired. The Thanksgiving offering was donated to the New Brunswick Seminary, and the contents of the Lenten Self-Denial Offering envelopes went to Camp Fowler. Elder Kenneth Germain was thanked by the Consistory for reporting that insurance on the Church had been raised to \$40,000, insurance on the Parsonage to \$7,000 and on the Tenant House to \$3,000. In 1961, Consistory went on record as opposing payment of a day's wage to Classis delegates. They opposed also the holding of Classis Meetings on Sunday. In 1962 church attendance averaged 71 at Sunday morning worship, and the church contributed \$350 to the support of the Rev. and Mrs. William H. Hoffman, then missionaries in India. In 1963, (January 4), it was moved and passed that Communion be celebrated six times per year. The dates set for the observance were: First Sunday in January, March, July and October, Maundy Thursday Evening and Thanksgiving Eve. Harold Hunter offered to pay \$3 per month for 36 months to help insulate the church ceiling and manse ceiling & to install storm windows in the Church, and for other special repairs as needed. His offer was gratefully accepted. Mrs. Ralph (Cathleen) Humiston, herself a good historian, told me that "Rev. Vedder organized the first Reformed Church Youth Fellowship. It was a large and active group, continuing for the three years he was here. He was loved by these young people. He also worked on Scouting, was once the President of the Community Center, and awarded the only God-And-Country-Award ever earned in Fort Miller to David Humiston.

He held family nights with a pot luck supper, which provided social fellowship once a month during the winter months, and his Confirmation Classes were the first in which our youth were instructed in the Reformed Faith (see the purchase of booklets Membership in the Reformed Church). He had a Bible-Book-of-the-Month-Club for those who wanted a spiritual uplift and good fellowship. He started the first Vacation Bible School (approved on April 28, 1961) which has continued with as much success as when he had it. He had meetings with young married couples, and he taught in the Released Time School in Schuylerville. "Mrs. Vedder, a trained singer, organized three choirs: Adult, Teenage and Junior, and brought great joy to all through their music. About 20 were in the Adult and Teenage Choir, and 10-12 in the Junior one. Many remember Lorna's voice and her lovely presence.

On May 13, 1963, Rev. Vedder resigned to go to Claverack, N.Y. His resignation was accepted with much regret. Both Elders and Deacons expressed their deepest appreciation of the work accomplished in material and spiritual things. Assurance was given of continued interest in his family's future happiness and success. His letter of May 3rd, 1963, to Consistory, asking for the dissolution of Pastorate, was very touching. After mentioning how difficult it is for a man to make up his mind to leave one parish for another, and exclaiming that a minister's work is never done, no matter how long he remains, he writes: "How does a minister know when he should move from one parish to another? I suppose for every man the signs vary. I can speak only for myself. Mrs. Vedder and I have enjoyed living and working in Fort Miller. We did not send out the word that we were "ready to move". We were not seeking to move. Instead the call came to us from the Claverack Church. They seemed to feel after hearing me preach in Claverack, that I would be suited to the needs of their parish. After much prayerful and thoughtful consideration, I also felt that I could satisfy their needs.

"Lorna and I hope that during our three years here we have helped you gain a better understanding of yourselves as a church, the body of Christ, put here in Fort Miller for a purpose, to serve God in many ways. We hope, we have helped you gain a vision of God for the future. We hope that many of the young people with whom we have worked will be led to take up where the older members leave off. "With these thoughts in mind then, I wish to invite the Consistory to join with me in application to the Classis for dissolution of the pastoral relation with the Fort Miller Reformed Church to become effective the last day of July, 1963." Rev. Vedder's life was cut off shortly after having gone to Claverack. Yet, in that time, working as hard as he had here, he had begun to plan for the present beautiful parish house in Claverack and had been elected president of Particular Synod, which never happens, unless a man is cordially trusted and liked by his brethren. This, therefore, is the life story of an educated man who, in giving his all "in a few days fulfilled many years."

REV. CHARLES CORNELIUS ANKER
1964-1968

Rev. Charles Cornelius Anker was born in Long Beach, California, on February 15, 1933. He obtained his A.B. from William and Mary College in 1957, his B.D. from New Brunswick Theological Seminary in 1962. He was licensed by the Classis of California in 1963; ordained by the Classis of Saratoga in 1964.

He became the Pastor of the Fort Miller Reformed Church from 1964-1968, Assistant Pastor of the First Reformed Church in Kingston, NY, 1968-1970; Director of Youth Activities in St. Paul's Methodist Church, Oxnard California 1971. He is now (1971) serving the Methodist Church of Santa Monica, California. In the Consistory Minutes of November 22, 1963, it is reported: "Mr. Anker is a candidate."

He was thirty years old when he came to Fort Miller, and he appealed strongly to youth. He had their burning interest in the blazing issues of the day and, like them, the impatient heart that was not yet tempered by responsibility. He also had a sense of beauty; creative ideas as to what could be accomplished with church buildings and property, if and when money was available. Mrs. Anker, or Barbara, as the Congregation fondly called her, took an active part in Sunday School and in the Vereengheit Circle, and when her first baby, Christian Marcus, was born, to live only a few hours, they mourned with her in her sorrow.

In 1964 a spirit of positiveness prevailed. The church finished the upstairs of the parsonage with a flair that is still enjoyed by your present minister. The \$350 annual contribution to Rev. and Mrs. William H. Hoffman in India was continued, and a Book of Remembrance was purchased. A Baptismal Font was sought and a marble pillar, given by Mr. Ernest Gould was settled for. The proceeds from the Thanksgiving Eve Service were donated to the Washington County Home for the Aged. Liturgies were purchased with money from the Memorial Fund, and with its balance red carpet was installed in the balcony of the church. A date was set for September to dedicate the liturgies and the pipe organ, given to us, rebuilt, installed, tuned and played by Deacon James Petit. The choir was now ably directed by Rita Center Thorne.

A motion was passed to help the Reformed Church in America meet "The Crisis in the Nation". Permission to use the Church Parlors for health shots to children was twice granted. The Board agreed with Pastor that the Lottery Amendment should be opposed, and they also agreed that "Sex Education for children in grades 9-12 take place in Schuylerville, Bacon Hill and Fort Miller." Rev. Anker understood young people's love for drama. So he coached a group., producing a play entitled: "Christ In

The Concrete City.” This was put on in Wynantskill, NY., Princeton, NJ., Glens Falls, NY., and in the Preakness Reformed Church of Wayne, NJ. The proceeds went back into youth work. This play definitely made an impression upon all who saw it, as did “The Journey To Ger” used at a Layman’s Program on January 21, 1967. In addition, it made Fort Miller known beyond it’s boundaries. But the church was having property problems with reference to the present Town Hall and the Tenant House. A committee of four was to “evaluate the Tenant House and the Voting Place as to the future of the buildings. ”The Committee consisted of Richard Kidwell, Henry De Groot, Ruth Murry, and Harriet Hunter. When their report was brought in, a motion was made by Consistory to dispose of the Tenant House by razing it. This motion carried by a 6:2 vote on November 5, 1965. Elder Kenneth Germain, appointed to look into the illegalities of the matter, reported on December 3, 1965: “Bylaw it might be legal to raze the house, if there was no income from same, and if this could be decided on by members of the church.”

Various matters of interest began to interject themselves. Mr. John Feidt offered a substantial sum for repairs. Mr. Bernhard Pett was instructed to draw up plans, specifications, etc. to estimate the cost of necessary repairs for Consistory’s approval. Finally, John Feidt’s offer was rejected (the reasons for this action are not recorded in the minutes), and a motion was now made to advertise the Tenant House and the Town Hall for sale, the buyer to remove them at his own expense. Any and all offers were to be left to the decision of the Consistory (June 24, 1966). But none came. It seemed as if the good Lord intended both buildings to stay where they are. In the meantime, the spiritual life of the Congregation was wavering. Attendance was down, and Rev. Anker had to ask for more interest in Classis programs. James Petit and Malcolm Sanders were appointed to secure the addresses of delinquent church members who were to be consulted as to whether they wanted to remain on the active list of the church or not. Giving, too, had fallen behind, and unpaid bills amounted to \$900. With only \$190 in the Treasury, a motion was made and seconded that the church borrow \$2,000. This motion was defeated, but a new one, to borrow \$1,000 to pay the bills, with the loan to be renewed after three months, if necessary, carried.

The Rev. Anker now announced that he had accepted the Assistant Pastorate of the First Reformed Church at Kingston, NY. and asked to be relieved of his duties as pastor. His request was granted, with the dissolution to take place on August 30, 1968. When the young people, who loved Rev. Anker dearly because he was one of them, heard about his leaving, they presented a petition to the Consistory to have Rev. Anker stay, not knowing that severing of ties on the part of the pastor from the church was already final. When, in consequence, nothing could be undone, they were very disappointed, and many left, never to be seen again.

MILLARD MAITLAND GIFFORD 1969-1972

Millard M. Gifford, son of Clarence Von Beck Gifford and May Eckerson Mence, was born on July 5, 1906, in Old Tappan, New Jersey. He made a public confession of his faith in Christ at the age of 12, together with two of his brothers, Clarence Burdette and Kenneth Mence, in the Tappan Reformed Church, Tappan, NY. His preparatory studies were pursued in Old Tappan Grammar School, Dumont High School, and Rutgers University, where he obtained his A.B. in 1929 and won seven prizes at graduation. He received his B.D. from Union Theological Seminary in 1932, and his S.T.M. from Union Theological Seminary in 1941. In 1930 he married Violet Reid Conover of Pearl River, NY. Of that union, one son, Philip De Veaux Gifford, was born in 1931. His first pastorate was in Cambria Heights, L.I. NY, where, while still in seminary, he was called as Preaching Elder in 1931 and was ordained in the St. Albans, NY. Presbyterian Church by the South Classis of Long Island. In Cambria Heights, he was instrumental in building the Cambria Heights Community Church (Reformed) which he shepherded for 11 years, bringing in 300 members in one three-year period, and organizing “The Seventy”, a women’s service group that canvassed every home in that area. His second church was the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church at Acquackanonk (First Reformed Church of Passaic, N.J.), which he served for 15 years. While there, he headed for three years the Passaic County Shelter Care Committee which forced the Freeholders of Passaic County to erect a \$180,000 shelter for abandoned, deserted and destitute children. For his outstanding service to the cause of Brotherhood and Inter-Faith Relations” in Passaic, NJ. he received, in 1955, the coveted B’nai Brith Award. In 1956, Rev. Gifford left the pastoral field and turned to fund raising. Later he served as Assistant Financial Consultant to The Protestant Council of the City of New York. While in his third year, he was made Executive Secretary (Director) of the Bronx Division of the Protestant Council. As such he was responsible for coordination of all Protestant Churches in that borough.

This involved religious education, youth and women's work (United Church Women). He also supplied various pulpits on Sundays. One of the churches, which he frequently served, was the Williamsbridge Road Reformed Church, which later gave him a call because of his "eloquent, extemporaneous preaching". He served the Williamsbridge Road Reformed Church from 1960 to 1969. Williamsbridge Road is part of the Bronx and has inner-city problems. But the church stood up to them. Not only was the physical plant maintained, but the church tore down the ugly fences that had hitherto protected it and created a green oasis for the enjoyment of all. It also became an active member of the East Bronx Protestant Fellowship, a group of churches which worked together on community problems and worshipped together during Lent and on Easter Sunday Morning. The Scouts and DeMolays called the church their home, and an extremely active Ladies Guild gave monthly luncheons and parties which were, and are, the delight of the citizens in that area. A Theatre Group, under the directorship of Mrs. Charlotte C. Gifford (Rev. Gifford re-married in 1959), made an impact on the community with its ecumenical spirit and because it faced present-day issues, such as drug abuse, etc. squarely.

While working in the Bronx, Pastor Gifford also served on Community Planning Board No. 11, the "Lay Advisory Board" of Fordham Hospital, which fought City Hall successfully to keep Fordham open. He was Spiritual Advisor to the St. George Association of Electrical Workers Union No. 3, and later Co-Spiritual Advisor of the Bronx-Westchester Chapter of Kiwanis. The Giffords were looking for a change in pastorate, because Mrs. Gifford was suffering from chronic bronchitis, the result of heavy air pollution in the Bronx. They wanted to stay in New York City or some place nearby, where Mrs. Gifford could continue in her job as administrator of a French import-export company. While they were still thinking about what to do, a request to candidate came, like a bolt out of the blue, from the Fort Miller Reformed Church by way of George Gamble, President of Consistory, and Ralph Humiston, long-time Clerk of Consistory. The result was, they fell in love with the church and accepted the Call.

Serious attempts were made to find employment for Mrs. Gifford in the North Country, but since nothing comparable salarywise could be found, a hard decision was reached: Mrs. Gifford would continue working in New York and commute. Although Mrs. Gifford has thus "only" been a commuter since coming to Fort Miller, her generosity and her talents -her writing, music and teaching have been very much a part of this church. Let me tell you something about her. She was born Charlotte Caroline Elizabeth Heyser, in Berlin, Germany, in 1920. Her parents were Erich Friedrich Heyser, of Berlin, and Hetti Schlott, of Wetzlar. Her mother was born in the same house where Johann Wolfgang Goethe, the great German poet, once lived. Mrs. Gifford's first husband was Captain John Joseph Schidler, killed in the Russian Caucasus mountains during World War II. She came to this country to be a Journalist, and has many writing credits in German and English newspapers and magazines in this country. She and Pastor Gifford met in the New School for Social Research, New York City, while both were studying magazine writing. That the course was successful is proved by the fact, that Rev. Gifford published "Symphonic Silver", a book of poetry, and contributed many articles to Church Management, Christian Century Pulpit Church Herald, Guideposts, and various NY newspapers. One prize-winning tract, entitled "Light Your Candle" has been published in English, Swahili and Tamil. One of his "Beatitudes" was published in the English and Chinese editions of "Guideposts". Work at the Fort Miller Reformed Church was completely different from city work, and without the help of maps and descriptions furnished by Mrs. Ralph (Cathleen) Humiston, Pastor Gifford would have had a hard time finding his parishioners. But even so, he found that many adherents and members, particularly the younger ones, had vanished. Work had to begin again from scratch.

The Prayer Chain introduced by the Rev. Vedder, was revived. The fellowship with Old Saratoga and Bacon Hill churches was knitted more closely through common worship services. And four ways were devised to "put Fort Miller on the map":

1. A large directional church sign was donated by the Giffords and erected on Route 4.
2. An annual concert with the help of the Skidmore College Madrigal Singers (under the leadership of Professor Ruth Lakeway) was held.
3. An annual chicken barbecue was instituted.
4. In May of 1970, the FORT MILLER PATRIOT, a monthly 4-page paper, made its debut and has not only brought in more than sufficient funds to pay for itself, but has interested readers in 15 states.

While the Choir and our Vereengheit Circle unwaveringly kept up their work and activities, the men, too, rallied around the church in a number of Work-Bees which took care of many necessary repairs. Hundreds of work hours were put in by them, and all who participated will always remember the comradeship of those days. In 1971 James Petit and Albert Wachter

finished a new room in the Tenant House, and the rent was increased by Consistory to \$40 per month. The Sunday School, too, under the leadership of Ralph Humiston, chairman of Christian Education and Superintendent, kept on the move. They introduced a new duplex envelope system which enabled them, in 1971, to send five students to Camp Fowler. Daily Vacation Bible Schools were held in 1969, 1970, and 1971, each year with excellent cooperation, good results and lots of enjoyment. Also in 1971, a gift of \$125 from Mrs. Neil (Idalee) Sanders and Mrs. Hazel Sanders, Neil's mother, made possible the future restoration of the little room located between the sanctuary and the church parlor. This room will be called the "Neil Sanders Room", to honor this devoted, former Sunday School Superintendent, now deceased. This is our church today: One congregation that loves the Lord and is willing to witness for Him through worship, giving and service. Of course, our financial worries are still with us. How else could it be during a time of drastic inflation? But we believe that nothing worth having is ever gained without a struggle. And those who continue to live and witness for Christ in Fort Miller, must continue to struggle!

POSTSCRIPT.

On May 15, 1972, Mrs. Gifford and I shall leave Fort Miller (which we shall greatly miss) to take up retirement residence in Bavaria. Our address will be: Rev. and Mrs. Millard M. Gifford 72 Sonthofen/Alig. 8, Richard Wagner Str. 6 WEST GERMANY. May the great and loving God bless all you good people as you continue the struggle to keep the Fort Miller Reformed Church, 'JEWEL OF THE NORTH', open always for the worship of God and service to man. "Be not weary in well doing, for in due season you shall reap, if you faint not." (Galatians 6:9.) Rev. Millard M. Gifford

SOURCES CONSULTED FOR THIS WORK.

My greatest single help on our Church's history came from the Consistory Minutes of our Church from 1822-1930, lovingly and laboriously typed by Jefferson D. Davis (related to the original Jefferson Davis), an engineer, who was intrigued by history and aware of its great significance. Here is his foreword as it appears at the beginning of the 1822-1930 volume: "I am not a man of wealth, nor of much leisure. I have here at home learned what little I know about using a typewriter. At odd hours I have copied the following pages from the records of the Church, for my own library. The work does not profess to be that of an expert in any line, only the rough work of a farmer. Sometimes I just did not know how to put the writing onto the sheets in the best form, sometimes the typewriter just seemed not to write good.

"Laying all apologies aside, the work is from my hand, done free and at my own expense of time, labor, and money, for my own use in pursuing my little hobby of looking into local history. It is free for the use of any person who wants any information it may contain, and I hope in the years to come after I am gone that it may be of use to some other person. I am not offering it to anyone at any price, but am willing that anyone interested may join me in the use of its information." -Jefferson D. Davis Fort Miller, NY, January 1931.

The original minutes (all of them) of Buskirk, Old Saratoga, Northumberland and Gansevoort Churches have been read, as well as our own. I thank Rev. William H. Hoffman for permitting me to read the minutes of Old Saratoga and Northumberland in his possession. These sources were very helpful, particularly in straightening out dates, and for the magnificent testimonies they contained. All available, relevant histories of Washington, Rensselaer and Saratoga Counties and towns have been scanned. Personal visits have been made to Williams College, Union College and Columbia University to obtain information from the Alumni Office. Often the most human and delightful information comes from Alumni files. To colleges which I could not visit because of time and money limitations, I sent letters and have received much additional information in this way.

I have gone to Princeton Theological Seminary, to New Brunswick Theological Seminary, where I looked over the material in the Archives relating to ministers and churches) consulted General Synod Minutes, Collegiate Year Books, Ecclesiastical Histories; the original minutes of the Classis of Washington (which preceded our Saratoga Classis), read pertinent material in Corwin's various Manuals of The Reformed Church, and in the newspapers which preceded our Church Herald. I thank Rev. David L. Engelhardt, Miss Elsie B. Stryker and other assistants for much valuable help. Appreciation is due The New York State Library in Albany, and librarians in Schuylerville, Glens Falls (Crandall Library), Greenwich and Saratoga; to the County Clerk's Office and County Historian Mrs. Mildred Southard, for much help in checking dates of incorporation and other records.

A special "Thank you" is due Mrs. Warren Coon, Secretary of the Hudson Falls Presbyterian Church, who helped supply wonderful material on Joseph Parry, Charles Dor Kellogg and Jacob Servis LaRue; to Mr. Stanton Wilbur of Greenwich, Mr. Charles Hunt of Buskirk, Mrs. Joseph Glass (Rev. Charles W. Kinney's daughter) and Mrs. Mildred Webster Rooke of Schuylerville; to Mr. and Mrs. James Petit, Mrs. Ruth Murray, Mrs. Ralph Humiston. Mrs. Richard Kidwell, Mrs. Harold Hitchcock, and Mrs. Kenneth Germain of our Congregation, who supplied some very interesting items out of their own collections and those of Mrs. Alvin R. Hatch, Mrs. Gordon McEachron of Argyle, herself an excellent historian, helped check out a number of important items for me. I thank also the Rev. Gerald Hazzard of Argyle, for his personal interest and encouragement. The list of ministers and supply pastors of the Fort Miller Reformed Church took a tremendous amount of time to verify and as far as I can make it, it is accurate.

In material on the Fort Miller Centennial celebration, included in Mrs. Alvin R. Hatch's scrapbook, two ministers are said to have served our Church, whose names appear in nothing else I have read. They are: Rev. Charles Loosing and Rev. Peter Milliken. Neither name occurs in Corwin's Manual, our "Bible" on such matters, nor in the volume which brought Corwin up to date: "Historical Directory of The Reformed Church in America 1628-1965". Jefferson Davis says truly that "our minutes are not perfect". "One year," he declares, "went by without any minutes being written at all." There is time enough in one year for two supply pastors to have come and gone. Three conclusions appear immediately:

1. Catherine Petit Hatch (Mrs. Alvin R. Hatch) may have had records other than those typed by Jefferson Davis,
2. a mistake was inadvertently made,
3. or these men were pastors who supplied our pulpit for a very short time.

One other clipping (undated, and without source mentioned) in Mrs. Hatch's scrapbook indicates that a "Rev. John M. Webster (Methodist) served the Fort Miller Reformed Church for three years, with increasing pleasure and profit to the people". No mention of Rev. Webster occurs in our Minutes. On April 26, 1971 I contacted his grand-daughter, Mrs. Mildred Webster Rooke, of Schuylerville, NY., about this. She had never heard of any such connection, and said there was no way to prove it, since many old records in her attic had been destroyed by a tornado some 40 years ago. Several things struck me as I read the original minutes of the churches having a place in Fort Miller's history. The information is so scanty, so lacking individuals and color! Most of the time a minister appears on the scene without anything being said about his background, former churches served, etc.

And nothing was ever said by anyone about a minister's wife, until Samuel Wells, literary genius of the Old Saratoga Consistory, paid a glowing tribute to Mrs. J. Wilbur Chapman. I was struck, too, by the fierce competition that existed in rural areas for documents having historical significance. During the periods when Stated Supplies held forth, (when ministers were not stationed here), how many hands snatched papers and records from the church files and perhaps have them still as prized relics of literary piracy: To any persons who may still have Fort Miller Reformed Church documents, remember that they belong to the Church and should be returned at once. In closing, I want to thank you once more, Jefferson Davis for taking the one essential step necessary for good, reliable history: The recording of it. Without your massive labors, my own would have been impossible. And my wife and I sincerely trust that someone who follows us in this pastorate will carry the research even further.

REV. CHARLES E. BAILEY
September 1972 - July 2011 (and ongoing)

How does one measure the impact of nearly four decades of ministry? How does one know how many lives have been truly challenged and changed? Only the final day of human history, when God's books are fully opened, will reveal that tally. Until then, we trust that the secret, silent work of God's Holy Spirit goes on as He wills, and that His kingdom is slowly but surely being built.

39 years ago, Charles and Debbie came to Fort Miller, put down roots, and have remained here ever since. I (Charles) remember well one summer afternoon in Charlottesville, Va. (where I was still working on my Ph. D. in European History and pastoring a small country church) hearing the telephone ring. I walked inside from the front yard, where I had been praying

and musing about my future (having sent out about 50 job resumes for a teaching position and getting nowhere), and on the other end of the line was the booming voice of Dr. Charles Eisenhart, the president of Adirondack Community College in Glens Falls, asking if I would be interested in flying up and candidating for a history position. Not really knowing anything about the beautiful Adirondack region or the State University of New York system, I nevertheless said a quick, why, of course, our men interviewed for the job, and the college offered me the position. Very excited and thankful, Debbie and I came back up a few weeks later to look for a place to live. During the course of conversations with our realtor, and after not really finding a suitable place to rent, she mentioned that she knew a small church in the area looking for a pastor. She made a telephone call; a meeting of the Fort Miller Reformed Church Consistory was scheduled; I was asked to preach in early in September and in the meantime allowed to live in the empty parsonage until a final choice was made among the three candidates. At the end of September, the church offered me the position, and Debbie and I began a long and wonderful journey of faith with the good folk of Fort Miller.

So, in hindsight, I have to ask myself pure chance, coincidence, or Providence? I choose to believe in the latter. And with a deep sense of humility and profound gratitude to God, I have to say that both the teaching position at college and the pastoral position here at the church were gifts from on high. I knew nothing about either post; rather, both were, so to speak, dropped in my lap from a benevolent heavenly Father.

But back to trying to quantify the accomplishments of 39 years. Well, for starters, the church is still standing and continuing to function. We are the last public building existing in the village, whereas a little over half a century ago there was a post office, general store, hotel, a Baptist Church, a Boy's Academy, a paper mill, and trolley tracks. All are now gone all except the Reformed Church, which, thanks to the hard work, faithfulness, and many labors of love of the congregation, continues to testify to the goodness of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We continue to have a Sunday morning worship service 52 Sundays a year, a Vacation Bible School each summer, weekly Sunday School classes, Youth Group meetings, an active Women's Circle, a mid-week Bible Study, a vibrant choir, acolytes, and monthly Consistory meetings.

If one wants merely to look at raw numbers, the past 39 years have witnessed 128 weddings, 131 baptisms (including three immersions in the Hudson river, one of which made front page news in the local section of the POST STAR), 145 funerals, nearly 2000 sermons, a crashing chandelier, a straight line wind sheer in 1995, the addition of a new bedroom, laundry room, front screened porch, and remodelled kitchen in the parsonage, and the birth of three sons into the Bailey family. After the surprise arrival of our twins, Christopher and Peter, in October 1974, we were blessed with our third child, Jeremy, in February, 1978, The twins graduated from Wheaton College in Illinois, and Jeremy, from Clarkson University in Potsdam. All three married lovely, local girls, and together have seven children; so, we are the proud grandparents of six granddaughters and one grandson. Also, all three families are engaged in Christian ministry: Peter, through his Upstate Jail Ministry, with weekly Bible studies in Washington and Warren County jails; Christopher, as worship leader in his local Corinth Presbyterian Church, and Jeremy, through his wife, in Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship on college campuses.

We have had many upgrades to our church in the last four decades, including (1) the building of an archival collection of books, maps, photographs, and other ephemera, including the diaries of a former neighbor, Jefferson Davis (a distant relative of the Civil War hero), providing research opportunities for those interested in Washington County and surrounding regions, and we thank Malcolm Sanders for his many hours as a labor of love on this project; (2) the adding of a separate hour for Sunday School classes on Sunday morning (9:30 am), with a continuing worship service at 10:30 am, thus providing opportunity for our deserving teachers to re-fill their spiritual buckets after emptying them during the previous hour, (3) the development of a web site where area visitors can find our hours of worship and special activities, and we thank our present site coordinator, Paul Flanders, for his expertise in this field; (4) the addition, in 1983, of four new Sunday School rooms, constructed by Mark Anderson, one of our deacons.

Ongoing arms of worship and service include a jubilant choir, under the capable direction of our organist, Debbie Anderson; an energetic Youth Group, led by Jennifer Flanders. Bill McCulley, and Ron White; an active Sunday School with six classes for our children and two for our adults, led by Cindy Blanchard; and a dedicated Women's Group (the Vereengheit Circle), led by Melody White. Also, we continue to participate in the ecumenical Lenten Services and the Upstate Jail Ministries, to lead worship at the Pleasant Valley Nursing Home in Argyle, and to support four area food pantries,

If I were asked what I consider to be the core of our ministry, I would have to answer: Bible-based teaching sermons, seeking

to integrate Holy Scripture within a historical context and making practical applications to current issues. We seek to echo the 16th-century cry of Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the other Protestant reformers of the Scriptures the Scripture alone is the source of all spiritual authority and clearly reveals God's perfect plan of salvation. We continue to affirm to faith of our fathers, a belief in the Holy Trinity, the deity, incarnation, virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death on the cross, and physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. We believe that His healing grace continues to minister to the heart, soul, mind, and body of all who will come to Him in simple, childlike faith. We believe that baptism can properly be administered by either sprinkling, pouring, or immersion; that believers should avail themselves of the sacrament of Holy Communion on a regular basis, and that they should seek to minister to the needs of their local community and world.

Within the last decade, one of the most memorable events was our special service on the evening of 9/11/01, after the tragedy at the Twin Towers. After receiving a phone call from a distraught mother in Manhattan who could not locate her daughter (the girl turned up safe and sound) and gradually realizing the enormity of what had happened, we decided to hold a community service of intercession. Our church was full; we sang and prayed and sought God's presence in the midst of tears.

As we continue to confront a world filled with war, turmoil, and uncertainty, let us take comfort in the God who has promised: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," And let us pray that Fort Miller Reformed Church will continue to bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ.

**Part 2 - New items of historical interest
(not published in The Phoenix)
dealing with the church and the community.**

1. An overview of the history of the area before 1822. (The French and Indian War and the beginning of economic activity) in the area from Jefferson D. Davis' research)
2. The "Great Argyle Raid." (Seeking new church members from the Argyle area in 1828)
3. The Scarlet Letter. (The consistory's 1843 trial and excommunication of a church member for having a child out-of-wedlock and the influence of Calvinism)
4. The "Great Awakening." (Religious, civic and community groups at the church in the late 19th and early 20th centuries)
5. The role of women in the church. (Late 19th century through current times)
6. Honoring our soldiers. (World War I)
7. The church's centennial celebration. (Three-day program and Jefferson D. Davis' pageant)
8. Surviving the "Great Depression." (Paying the pastor in food, the coverlet, the "kitchen band" and theatrical plays in the 2nd floor auditorium)
9. Honoring our soldiers. (World War II)
10. Church life, the late 1940s/1950s.

1. An overview of the history of the area before 1822, the date the Fort Miller Reformed Church was organized. Fort Miller received its name from the fortification constructed in 1755 by the British officer, Colonel Miller, on a bluff on the west side of the Hudson River, directly across from the hamlet of Fort Miller. This fortification (a block house on the bluff/store houses on the flat peninsula jutting into the river, housing 160 soldiers and four cannon) was designed to control the portage around the rapids at that point on the river and deter (and hopefully stop) the French and their Indian allies from moving south to attack Old Saratoga (Schuylerville) and Fort Orange (Albany) during the French and Indian War. Later, Colonel William Duer began the economic development of the area around Fort Miller with the construction of a grist mill (1768) at the base of the rapids and a snuff mill and powder mill. In 1816 the Bleecker family of Albany, with significant land holdings in the area, donated the property on which the church now stands. (Source: Jefferson Davis' History of Fort Miller, pp 21, 112, and 135.)

2. The "Great Argyle Raid" (1828).

The Fort Miller Reformed Church did not grow rapidly after its formation in 1822. In 1828 the church consistory, concerned over this lack of growth, decided to send representatives into the Argyle area to bring new members to Fort Miller. This effort resulted in many new members joining the church. But it may have provoked some ill will among the members of the churches

in Argyle and contributed to the Argyle Protestant Reformed Dutch Union Church closing in 1835. (Anecdote.)

3. The Scarlet Letter (1843).

The April 28, 1843 Consistory minutes describe the start of a situation very similar to the plot line in Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter and show the influence of strict, conservative protestant theology. In this meeting the Consistory, the leaders of the church, raised a concern regarding an unmarried, pregnant member of the congregation. Two Consistory members were then sent to bring the woman before the consistory on charges of "the crime of fornication with the aggravated sin of coming to the Lord's table twice since that crime was committed." Ultimately, the woman said that she was guilty of these charges. The Consistory then decided that she be "suspended from communion and fellowship of the church." There is no record in the Consistory meeting minutes of reinstating the woman nor do we have any account regarding what happened to the woman and her child. (Note: The consistory minutes also contain several accounts of church members (all men) being brought before the Consistory on charges of alcohol use. The men were allowed to remain in good standing with the church after agreeing to abstain. These 19th century, quasi-judiciary examples of the functioning of the church Consistory probably reflect the practical application of the teachings of the 16th century Protestant theologian John Calvin and the then uneven treatment of men and women in the church.)

4. The third "Great Awakening" (late 19th into the early 20th century).

The third "Great Awakening" refers to spiritual/religious revival taking hold in the central part of New York State at that time. During this time, church membership and Sunday School attendance increased. The church started a Christian Endeavor program for young adults. The hamlet of Fort Miller was at its commercial peak with paper, saw and grist mills, hotels, schools, several grocery stores operating. The trade and boat building associated with the Champlain Canal was flourishing. In 1896 the church added a dining room and 2nd story meeting room and stage to the 1816 sanctuary. This addition hosted community suppers, plays, fraternal organization meetings and the Hudson Grange #1286. (Note: A playbill for one of these plays is in the archive.)

5. The role of women in the church.

In the earliest days of the Fort Miller Reformed Church women could not vote to decide church matters; only the men voted. In 1892, as the suffragette movement was beginning to grow, the women of the church organized a group ("Mighty Mites") to raise money, undertake charitable programs and to begin to have a voice in church affairs. In 1929 the "Mighty Mites" reorganized into the "Vereengheit Circle" and continued to raise money to keep the church doors open during the "Great Depression" and after. The Circle continues today to be a vital part of church life.

6. The church and World War I.

On April 18, 1919 the church hosted a banquet for 17 returning veterans from area. Eight of these veterans were members of the church and their names are listed on a commemorative scroll contained in the archive. The archive also has a copy of the program for that evening honoring the returning veterans.

7. The church's centennial celebration (1822-1922).

In October of 1922 the church celebrated its centennial anniversary. This celebration included a special Sunday service and banquet. What makes this event especially significant was the performance of a historical pageant. This pageant was written by a church member, Colonel Jefferson Davis, and was based upon his primary research. Later, Colonel Davis organized this primary research into a book, The History of Fort Miller. This is an excellent historical research source, complete with footnotes and other documentation.

8. The church and the "Great Depression."

During the 1930s, things were done to "keep the front door open" and spirits high. On occasion, the offerings were not enough to pay the pastor during that time and meals from members of the congregation were provided as a substitute for a paycheck. (Note: We thank Cathleen Humiston for this anecdote.) As a fundraising project, the women's group charged one dollar to embroider a name on a coverlet. (Note: This coverlet with many names of members of the church and community is in the archive.) To have some fun and keep up spirits, a church member (Evelyn Lauder) organized a "kitchen band" whereby various utensils were used as band instruments. The "kitchen band" played during church social functions during the late 1930s. (Note: Our thanks to Leneta Gamache, Evelyn's daughter, for this anecdote.)

9. The church and World War II.

In 1943 a special Sunday church service was held to honor the 15 area men and church members serving in the armed forces. A commemorative scroll, listing the names of these men, is maintained in the archive.

10. Church life, the late 1940s/1950s

After World War II, church life settled into predictable rhythms, generally dictated by the change of seasons. In the mid 1940s, Reverend LaRue, our pastor at that time, held services at 3:00 pm on Sunday afternoon to accommodate his schedule as pastor of the Hudson Falls Presbyterian Church. The Vereengheit Circle held a turkey dinner each fall to raise money to help to cover church operating expenses. Early during this time, the Sunday School chartered a bus to transport kids to Round Pond for a summer picnic. (This continued the tradition of chartering Hudson Valley RR trolley cars to go to Round Pond for this year-ending picnic.) Later, these picnics were held at other locations such as the pavilion at Lake Sunnyside (Town of Queensbury), Lick Springs (near Argyle) and on church grounds. (Our thanks to Mary Major for some of these recollections.)

**Part 3 – Planning for the future of the church
to maintain it as an important and relevant
part of community life**

Since 1822, our mission has been to preach and spread God’s word of hope and support. We do this through holding Sunday worship service, Sunday school and youth programs, Bible study, and Vacation Bible School. Since 1892, the church has had an active women’s group, the Vereengheit Circle, known in the area for hosting dinners. In recent years, we support, through volunteers and financial contributions, the food pantry in Schuylerville (SAFER), the Upstate Jail Ministry programs in Washington and Warren Counties, the Fort Miller Riverside Cemetery, the Inter-Varsity ministry programs at Skidmore and other area colleges, the Gideons organization supplying Bibles to motels and other public places, the Joshua Project translating the Bible into indigenous languages throughout the world and the various worldwide missions of the Reformed Church in America. Our church has a Web site where weekly sermons and other materials are posted and a Facebook page to provide an additional communication channel. The church social/dining hall is available to the community for public events. The church has an archive of historical of church and community material open to the public. We take pride in maintaining our 1816 sanctuary and other buildings, in having received two local preservation awards and in having the church and its properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As a small, country church, we can do these things because of the continued faithfulness and the support from the members of our congregation and others in the community.

In the future we will continue, as we have since 1822, to carry out our historic mission to spread God’s word. We will continue to support these various programs and ministries that have grown with the church over the last 189 years. Our near-term goals are to build a more vibrant and growing church by continuing to grow in faith and knowledge of God, build and strengthen our relations with one another, in particular with those new members of the community, help to give our kids a strong set of moral values, support our elderly and maintain our property. Our long-term goal is to hand down to succeeding generations a spiritually growing and vibrant and physically well-maintained Fort Miller Reformed Church.

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