

HISTORY OF THE WEST MILFORD, NEW JERSEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FROM THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE TO THE PRESENT TIME,

AS COMPILED BY GILBERT V. P. TERHUNE

FOR THE YEARS 1807 - 1932

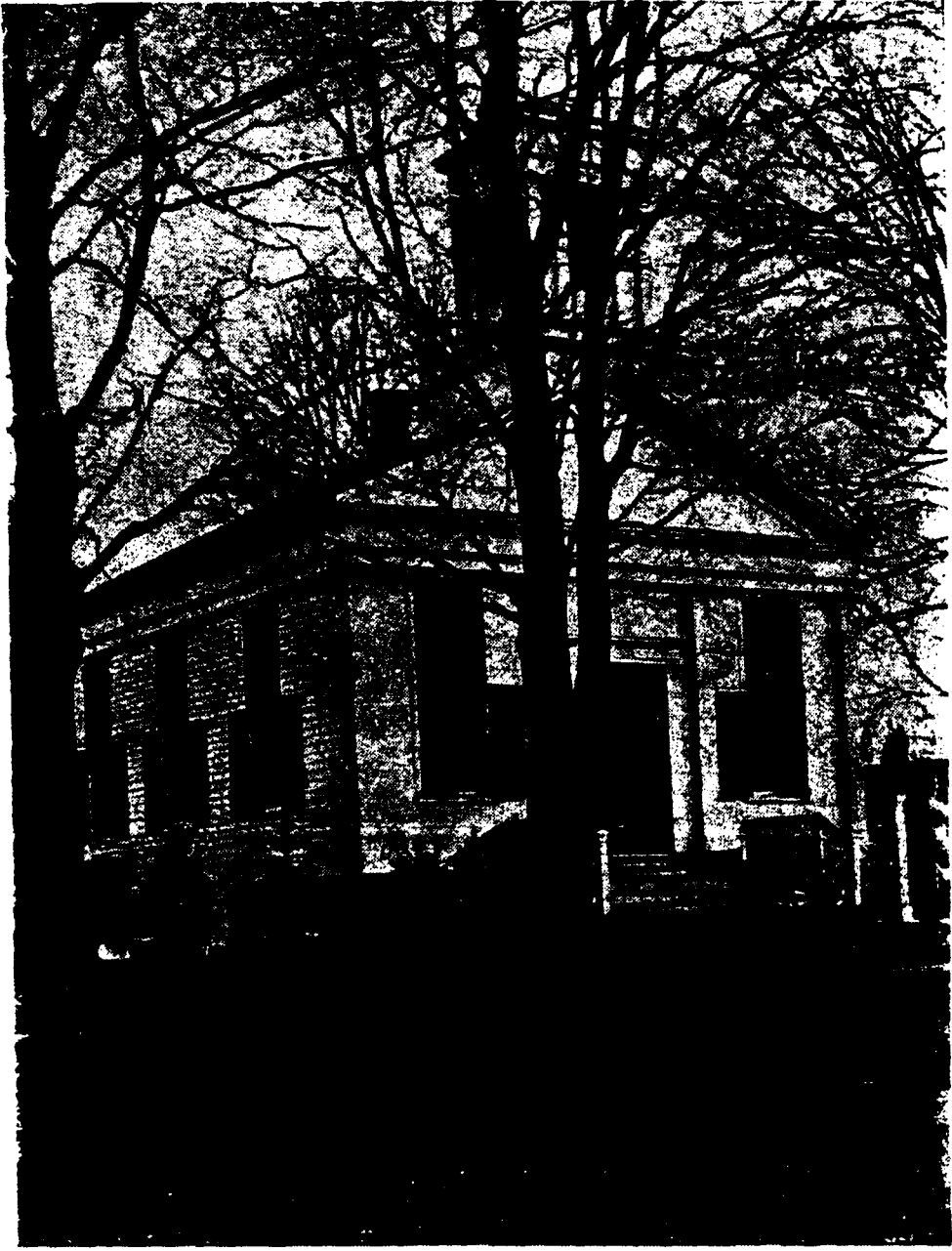
AND

REV. ALBERT H. MANUS

FOR THE YEARS 1933 - 1957



PREPARED FOR
THE 150th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
NOVEMBER 15 - 17, 1957



OUR CHURCH

With dignity of age it stands,
Above the village street.
Past generations worshiped here
With reverent souls, and sweet.

God called them from their earthly shrine
To mansions in the sky.
Now others strive, with faithful hearts,
To bear their torch on high.

O God, this be our earnest prayer,
As passing years roll by;
The doctrine of this little church
Lead us to Thee, on High.

Then, if it be Thy will, O Lord:
As history turns the pages,
May our village church, in all its charm,
Be a light down through the ages.

Helen Hess Terhune.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WEST MILFORD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

At the time of the building of the first Meeting House in 1807, this community was known as Long Pond Settlement, subsequently as New Milford, but not until 1834 did it assume its present name of West Milford.

Going back still further in the history of the community; in 1679 there were but seven hundred families living in the whole Eastern Division, State of New Jersey. By 1709, Bergen County was formed, embracing within its boundary this territory where our Church now stands.

By 1834 we were separated from Pompton Township and the present Township of West Milford was formed. Three years later, in 1837, Passaic County was formed from a part of the original Bergen County.

At the time of the formation of the Township of West Milford in 1834, we find it a thriving community. There were eleven schools, having an enrollment of 408 scholars, five saw mills were in operation, two grist mills, two tanneries, and as many as ten forges. The first school house in this immediate vicinity was located on the East side of the road, a short distance South of our present new parsonage.

One tannery was operated on what is now the farm of Mr. George Shackley. One of the first grist mills was situated at the foot of the Greenwood Mountain, known as the Woodruff Mill, and the other on the farm now owned by Gilbert Terhune. At least one of these mills was known to have been in operation as early as 1773, in grinding corn for the early settlers.

As early as 1806, the members of this community felt the need of a House of Worship, for on May 15th of that year, a few inhabitants of "Long Pond Settlement and vicinity, Township of Pompton, County of Bergen", met, and drew up articles of agreement for the building of the "Presbyterian Meeting House" on the farm of Andrew Miller; who donated the land for that purpose. The site of the first Meeting House, is the same as that on which our present Church now stands.

This first Meeting House was constructed of hand hewn logs, joined by wooden pins, and covered by boards which were hand scored. The nails used were hand forged, and the roof was covered with white cedar shakes, or shingles. This

building measuring forty by forty-five feet, was erected thru public subscription; fifty-nine members of the community pledging an amount of \$607.07, the largest single contribution being \$60.00.

The certificate of incorporation is under date of February 21st, 1807. at which time we find notation of a meeting at the home of Andrew Miller, where the following persons were "nominated and chosen Trustees to Direct and Superintend the Building of said Meeting House."

John Sanford
Abraham Pulis
Angus Monroe
John Freeland
James P. Neblow

The above mentioned trustees, drew up the by-laws, and at this same meeting, "The Subscribers to said Meeting House proceeded to name said Meeting House, when the following name was proposed and accepted":

"NEW MILFORD ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN MEETING HOUSE"

During the year of construction in 1807, we find page after page in the old minute book, devoted to the itemized account of building costs. These items are of especial interest in that they portray some of the hardships thru which our forefathers had to struggle, in what we are wont to call the "good old days".

We list below a few items taken at random from the old accounts:

To 1/2 days work	\$.37
To 1 days work, single team and man	1.37
To 1 days work, single team and two men	2.12
To 1 day hewing timber	1.00
To 1 day laying stone75
To 1/2 day hauling timber68
To Boarding 1 man 8 days	1.70
To 100 lbs. nails	12.50
To 175 ft. siding	1.75
To 500 shingles	3.37
To 2 1/2 gals. old Spirits @ \$1.25 gal.	

The last mentioned item appears regularly and frequently, and we are apt to conclude that in those days, it was perfectly proper for church members, or even the elders, to indulge in the use of strong drink: the impropriety, or disgrace. being in using

it to excess. In later years we note a change in this respect, and all elders of the church took the pledge of abstinence.

From 1807 to 1812, the records of the church are quite complete, but no mention is made of any preacher having conducted a service, and it is assumed the services were in charge of the leading members of the congregation.

From 1812 to 1818, no minutes were recorded, and it is supposed that during this period of six years, there was little or no interest manifested in the Meeting House. The war of 1812 was a possible reason for this omission. At least we know that one of the elders, Joseph Tichenor, was a captain, and also that one prominent member of the congregation, Albert Terhune, was on duty at the Sandy Hook fortifications.

In the year 1818, we come to an important period of our Church history. By this time the population of the community had greatly increased: many new settlers had come from the more thickly settled country to our south, to make their homes in this valley. They had been accustomed to the established churches, in the communities from which they came, and so it was found that the original Meeting House, altho built but eleven years before, was not suited to their needs. Accordingly, on January 10th, 1818, it was decided to take down the first Meeting House, and erect a new one on the same site. This was accomplished by public subscription, at a cost of more than double that of the first crude building. Among the sixty-five subscribers we find the names of many whose descendents are still in this community, such as:

Cahill	Eckhart
Sanford	Laroe
Terhune	Woodruff
Tichenor	Schofield
Monroe	Moss (Morse)
Cooley	Board
Pulis	and others

One year later; on January 27th, 1819, we find the following minutes recorded:

"The Lord having greatly blessed the inhabitants of this Settlement by the outpouring of his Holy Spirit, and smiling on the labours of his Missionary Servant; Mr. Edward Allen, sent unto us by the Missionary Society of Morris Town, it was deemed advisable that a Presbyterian Church be organized in this place". Accordingly a meeting was held at the house of Bethiel Tichenor, near the south end of Greenwood Lake (the present home of Mr. Neil Macdonald, Sr.)

At this meeting the Rev. Barnabas King, and E. W. Crane, of the Jersey Presbytery, conducted the services. Many members of our first Meeting House were present, including Mr. Jacob Bostedo, a member of the Morris County Presbytery, who was probably the founder of our first Meeting House.

The names of the first trustees elected were as follows:

Edward P. Eckerson

James Laroe

Albert Terhune

Charles Cahill

Daniel Woodruff

On January 31st, 1819, a Presbyterian Church was regularly constituted, and the ordinances administered by Rev. Allen: but not until August 14th, 1821, was Rev. Jacob Tuttle ordained by the Jersey Presbytery as our first pastor.

During the pastorate of Rev. Jacob Tuttle from 1821 to 1832, the minute books were well kept, and some of the passages from the books at this time were instructive, as well as amusing. We find the following under date of December, 1822:

“Resolved, that in as much as common fame charges Mr. a member of this session with unbecoming lightness and frivolity in his conduct and conversation, arising from the intemperate use of ardent spirits, etc. etc.” The elders continued their investigation of the case by appointing a committee to labor with this individual. The first committee not meeting with any great degree of success, another was appointed; and still others; until four years had elapsed, before all hope of persuading him to see the folly of his ways was abandoned, and he was finally excluded from the folds of the church.

Another direct quotation from the minute book, under date of February 6, 1831, is as follows:

“Resolved, that whereas a member of this session has to the certain knowledge of the session been guilty of the sin of purloining his neighbours property, viz: of covertly driving and disposing of a certain stray cow, to his own advantage and with intent to defraud the right owner thereof, and has also wilfully lied and variously prevaricated in order to hide the deed, grieving the church and giving the enemy occasion to speak reproachfully. Resolved that he be deposed etc. etc.”

Another interesting passage from the minute book, during the pastorate of Rev. Jacob Tuttle, reads as follows:

“The Session of this Church in view of the languishing

state of Religion here, the withdrawal of divine influence, and the alarming stupidity on divine things which uniformly prevails, do recommend the last Thursday of January, to be observed as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, that the Great Head of the Church would remember us, and afford us the special out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, and that divine services be attended here at 12 o'clock, as on the Sabbath."

Rev. Joseph C. Moore occupied the pulpit from 1833 to 1836, after which he removed to Succasunna, and our Church was without a pastor for nearly a year.

During Rev. Moore's pastorate, the Church made a far reaching decision in regard to alcoholic beverages; for at this time it was unanimously voted not to receive any persons as members who would not bind themselves to the temperance pledge.

Rev. Ebenezer McDowell served as pastor of our Church for three years. This was a period of revival meetings, and many new members were added to the congregation.

By the year 1839, we again find Rev. Joseph C. Moore at the head of our Church, to remain with us until ill health forced his retirement in 1843. Many important events took place during his pastorate, which were of lasting benefit to the Church, and community.

On the evening of February 21st, 1842, a great disaster overtook the community, when our Church burned to the ground. With true pioneer spirit, plans were immediately formed for the erection of our present Church building. Two members were appointed, Stephen Terhune and Peter Decker, Jr., to go abroad and make a study of Church buildings and submit building plans, (the term "abroad" in no way signifying an ocean voyage, for we are apprised of the fact later on, that their trip took them as far as Pompton in the one direction, and Deckertown in another.) These plans were subsequently submitted, and approved, with Stephen Terhune made superintendent of construction, and Peter Decker, Jr., foreman.

Fifty nine members of the community subscribed to the building fund, and altho the individual amounts pledged were indeed generous, still the total amount was insufficient; and contributions were asked, and received, from established Churches at Newfoundland, Deckertown, Rockaway, Sparta, Caldwell, West Bloomfield, Newark, Dover, Mt. Freedom, Amity, Chester, Paterson, and several others.

The total cost of this new Church building was about \$2,300.00 and we note that it was dedicated to the Service

of God, on December 7th, 1842; Rev. James W. Wood of Deckertown preaching the sermon.

From 1843 to 1846, Rev. Cornelius S. Conkling served as pastor of our Church. No events of importance occurred during this time, but it is recorded that the Church was still in debt, four years after being built; and that the lack of funds for paying the debt, or for paying the preacher his small salary, caused no little concern.

The question of selling the seats, or pews, in the Church was discussed at several meetings; as an expedient towards raising necessary funds. This was actually accomplished by auction sale, the prices obtained ranging from \$2.00 to \$50.00. Each purchaser received a deed for the pew so bought, and it was not uncommon to have these pews pass down thru the families from father to son. In fact, some of these transfers are still in the possession of the descendents of the original holders.

Rev. Daniel Higbie was called to this Church in 1847, and served until 1852 at which time he accepted a call to the Church at Sparta, and his place was filled by Rev. Wm. H. Magie, who remained until 1854, and possibly for two years after this date, as there is a break in our records at this point: there being no minutes recorded for a period of about three years.

We know that in 1858, Rev. James H. Board was installed, and remained here for one year, during which time there was a marked increase in Church membership.

At this time, in our country's history, there was an exodus of people from the Eastern States, to take up homesteads in the West; and Rev. Board was among those to heed the call of the West, leaving West Milford to take up his work of preaching in Illinois.

We find the following interesting item in our record books at this period:

"Four people being about to remove from this place to the State of Illinois, requested letters of dismissal, and recommendation to the Presbyterian Church of Chicago, or to any other Church of Christ in the bounds of which their lot might be cast."

Rev. Wm. L. Moore was minister for one year, at the end of which time Rev. James H. Board returned from Illinois, and was again installed as the minister of the West Milford Church. During his second pastorate here, from 1860 to 1865, there is very little information left us in the records of the Church. We know that the Civil War accounted for the

absence of practically all of the young men of West Milford, and we are led to surmise that this fact has some bearing on the omission of the Church records.

We are advised that a soldier returning to West Milford, was taken to task by the ruling elders of the Church for unbecoming conduct. We quote from the record book as follows:

"It being known that some of the members of the Church have participated in private dancing parties, and one at least, (the soldier) in the more public manner similar at least to a Ball, it was felt that something must be done to check this evil. Accordingly, a committee was appointed to visit members upon the subject, and endeavor to persuade them to desist from the practice of dancing."

The report goes on to state that the committee met with little success, and that the case was finally dropped.

At the close of the Civil War in 1865, Rev. James H. Board left West Milford, to accept a call to the Presbyterian Church at Parsippany.

No records are available for the year 1866.

Rev. S. S. Goodman assumed leadership in 1867, and continued as pastor until his farewell sermon in 1879.

Again we find the elders confronted with the ever recurrent trouble; namely, lack of funds to meet the current expenses of the Church, and it is resolved:

"After looking at, and finding ourselves considerably behind in money matters, we resolved to appoint and hold a Parish meeting to take into consideration the propriety of selling, or renting, the seats belonging to the Church; in common for the purpose of raising money, and also for the purpose of bettering our plans of sittings, and giving to regular attendants a more permanent and home-like place of worship than here-to-fore".

During this period the Church sold several building lots, 50x200 feet, at an average price of \$200.00 each. We note here that even the sexton, Jacob Laroe, was owed for a year's salary, and that the elders gave him a due bill for an amount of \$47.25, plus interest at 6 per cent, for one year. The minister received a salary of \$300.00 per year, but at times this amount was not available, and he was obliged to take whatever amount could be raised by subscription. Upon the resignation of Rev. S. S. Goodman in 1879, the Church was without a regular minister until the year 1881.

We are now coming to a period in our Church history within the memory of many of our present congregation. We

refer to the long and faithful services of our esteemed pastor Rev. J. Thompson Osler, who preached here at the West Milford Church for twenty-five years.

Installed here in 1881, he continued to serve the Church, and community, for the remainder of his life. Ill health prevented his occupancy of the pulpit in 1907, and shortly afterwards he died.

Rev. J. Thompson Osler, a graduate of the Theological Seminary of Princeton University, was a brilliant student; not only well informed on religious matters, but on politics and world wide events, as well. His memory was remarkable. During the latter part of his ministry he tutored a student in Latin; and his translations of Virgil were as readily made, and his knowledge of the subject apparently as clear, as the day he left college. The Rev. Dr. C. R. Kuebler says of him: "Mr. Osler was the faithful, genial, able minister in the community for 25 years, loved and honored by all. A number of his loyal flock attended his funeral service held in the First Presbyterian Church of Jersey City, October 9th, 1907. His dear flock wished to have his remains brought to the little Cemetery, where sleep so many for whom he pointed the way to Heaven; but his widow had other plans, hence he was interred in Princeton. His funeral was conducted by Rev. Charles Herr, D.D. Addresses were made by Rev. C. D. Shaw, D.D., Rev. Dr. C. R. Kuebler, and an appropriate prayer was offered by Rev. James D. Steele, Ph.D. Brother Osler was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and good works."

Among the noteworthy events during Rev. Osler's pastorate were: founding of the Woman's Missionary Society in 1885; meeting of the Jersey City Presbytery here in 1896; and the Centennial Celebration of the founding of the West Milford Church in 1906.

(Let us state at this time, that the celebration of the founding of the Church was incorrectly timed. While it is true that the oldest date shown in any of our Church records is 1806; that date merely chronicles a "Subscription Agreement", and it is not the time of the founding, or building, of this Church. The correct date is 1807.) This Centennial was a memorable occasion, from the fact that it was the first to occur within the Jersey City Presbytery. Furthermore, the Church received a permanent benefit at this time thru the raising of an endowment fund. The names of subscribers to this fund would be too numerous to mention; but undoubtedly there had never been a time in our history, when as much enthusiasm was shown, or as many sacrifices made, in so worthy a cause. Without undue credit being given to any individual, it would seem

proper to record, that: whereas the original plan called for the raising of a sum of but \$1000.00, thru the generous contribution of \$1000.00 made by a prominent member of this community, with the stipulation that \$2000.00 additional be subscribed; it was possible to increase the amount of the endowment fund, to \$3000.00.

It may be of interest to state, that the salary paid Rev. Osler ranged from \$400.00 to \$600.00 per year; which amount was raised by subscription. Once during each year a "Donation Supper" was held in the parsonage. This was a social event of importance, and largely attended by members of the Church, and community; who were greeted by the genial minister on the one hand, and the business like treasurer on the other. Donations were received not only in money, but in farm produce as well.

It will be recalled, that at the time of the building of the present school house, Rev. Osler purchased the old school house and presented it to the Church and community, to be used as a Chapel. This building was moved to its present site, and made suitable for the purpose intended. Meetings were held in this Chapel on each Tuesday evening of the week by the Christian Endeavor Society, and on each Friday evening it was used for "Prayer Meeting".

On August 12th, 1898, Rev. Osler dedicated the Church at Macopin. By agreement, the pastor of the West Milford Church, became likewise the pastor of this new Church, which was known as "The Methodist and Presbyterian of Macopin". Under this plan, the minister at West Milford preached each Sunday afternoon at Macopin, and received whatever added compensation might be obtained by this arrangement. This agreement remained in force until the year 1915.

The early records of the Womans Missionary Society were lost, but we have authentic information furnished by a committee appointed for this purpose. We know that Mrs. Osler was deeply interested in the cause of missions, and was the leading spirit of the Society for twenty one years. Her leadership, and ability, were recognized far and wide; for in 1903, she was elected president of the Woman's Home Missionary Society, of the Presbytery of Jersey City.

A noteworthy occasion for the West Milford Society occurred in 1904, when the Home and Foreign Missionary Society, of the Jersey City Presbytery, met here in this village. After Mrs. Osler left West Milford, a member of our Church took her work over, and kept the Missionary spirit alive. In 1918 the Society received a legacy of \$1000.00 from Mrs.

Harriet Cooley Cortelyou. The interest on this sum is sent each year to a college for girls in India.

Upon the death of Rev. J. Thompson Osler, Rev. Walsh was called to serve this Church. During his pastorate, there were no outstanding events of interest. Rev. Walsh left this Church to accept a call elsewhere; and Rev. Reuben Markham then came to the West Milford Church; where he remained until 1912; at which time he took up his work in Bulgaria. Rev. and Mrs. Markham will never cease to be remembered by their host of friends at West Milford, and the community suffered a real loss when duty called them to go as missionaries to a foreign land. Rev. Markham was a rare combination of student, farmer, mechanic and athlete, and quite naturally had an influence on the young people, to a marked degree. His short ministry here in our valley accomplished good results, and the absence of both Rev. and Mrs. Markham is still keenly felt.

Rev. Albert Chamberlain occupied the pulpit of the West Milford Church in 1913. This year holds an important place in our records, for on the 29th of January, the Ladies Aid Society was organized. The object of this society was, for the betterment of Church and community. Starting with a membership of twenty three ladies, having as their first president, Mrs. Sarah J. N. MacLaury, it has continued to grow and carry forward its notable work with undiminished fervor. The achievements of the Ladies Aid Society have been truly remarkable. To mention all of their deeds of generosity to the Church and community would be an impossible task, and in recalling the outstanding accomplishments, we do not do them full justice.

Their first gift to the Church was an Estay organ costing \$300.00 toward which the Carnegie Fund contributed \$150.00.

Since 1913 they have contributed each year, amounts varying from \$50.00 to \$550.00, to the general expenses of the Church. Towards the new parsonage they contributed \$550.00, and in the year 1928 the society earned, and spent for the Church and community, \$1395.00.

Individual efforts on the part of several of the Society's members, are noteworthy. One member, having conducted a continuous rummage sale over a period of years, was able to earn sufficient funds for the building of steps leading to the Chapel, and the erection of a retaining wall.

An outstanding achievement of the Ladies Aid Society was accomplished in clearing up the cemetery, and grounds

immediately surrounding the Church. For many years, the property surrounding the Church had been neglected, and was in a deplorable condition: monuments had fallen, weeds, brush, and briars, had reclaimed this old historic burying ground, and it was no longer a pleasing background for a House of Worship. Thru their efforts, the grounds were made beautiful, lending dignity to our old Church. After two years of work in raising funds for the carrying thru of this project, the society was able not only to have the work completed, but to report that \$1000.00 was invested as a trust fund, for the perpetual care of the cemetery.

Nor have the efforts of the society been entirely confined to assistance in this immediate community; for in 1923, at the passing of a beloved member, Mrs. James Edward Terhune, they decided to carry on the work which for many years Mrs. Terhune had been doing for the "Volunteer Prison League of America". Since 1923, the ladies have had meetings each year at Christmas time, to make clothing for the unfortunate families of these prisoners. Hand sewn baby garments, old clothes, and also contributions of money, are collected, and sent forward to the League, in memory of Mrs. Terhune.

At this period of the Church history, our pastors served only for short periods, and there were no events of paramount importance to relate. Rev. Albert Chamberlain was succeeded by Rev. Daniel Schauss in 1915, and 1916; and in 1917, Rev Schauss was succeeded by Rev. Henry Kauffman.

In 1918 Rev. Rudolph Meier was called, and it was the good fortune of the West Milford Church to have him as their pastor until 1922. Without doubt, Rev. Meier was exceptionally well qualified to minister to the needs of the community, in those trying days of the World War. His unbounded energy, coupled with his keen sense of duty to his country, made him especially effective in arousing in the young men of this community, a finer sense of duty to their country. Under his able leadership, the Red Cross work went forward with a vigor characteristic of this man of action, with results which did great credit to our community.

Rev. Meier left West Milford to accept a call to a Church in Paterson, N. J. and his vacancy was filled by Rev. A. E. Albertson, in 1923. During his pastorate here we record that the present parsonage was erected, and that Rev. Albertson was the first minister to occupy the new building.

Upon the resignation of Rev. Albertson, the pulpit was occupied by Rev. Archibald Blue, a scholarly man of brilliant address. Rev. Blue was a native of Canada, in which country

he had been a preacher and organizer of Churches in the far flung pioneer settlements. The stories of his experiences in a new country where saloons and dance halls flourished, but no churches existed, read like a page of history from our own great West. A truly great organizer, and hard worker, the results of his efforts were beneficial and lasting. Mr. Blue's period of service was all too short at West Milford; having received a call to a much larger Church in Toronto, Canada, his resignation was accepted by members of the Church and community, with a feeling of deep regret.

In 1926 a call was extended to Rev. Daniel Lorentz. During the ministry of Rev. Lorentz at West Milford, for a period of about two years, there was a marked increase in Sunday School attendance, and a more general interest manifested in, and by, the young boys and girls of this community; with results which were gratifying to the Church, and which reflected much credit to the earnest labors of Rev. Lorentz.

Rev. Russell Dierdorff carried on the Church work until the fall. During Rev. Dierdorff's term of service at West Milford, the affairs of the Church ran smoothly. Both he and his wife were young, ambitious, and full of energy. Both were of a most pleasing personality, and both gave their services to the Church and community, in a manner so gracious as to be long remembered by all. In November, 1929, Mr. Dierdorff announced his decision to leave West Milford for a larger field at Kansas City, Missouri.

The following people served on the committee for the selection of a pastor: Mrs. R. A. Smith, Mrs. H. G. Thorn, Ira M. Davenport, Thos. M. Miller, and Wilbur F. Herbert, Chairman. In March, 1930, the congregation voted unanimously to extend a call to Rev. John McMurray of Delaware Water Gap at a salary of \$1,800.00 per annum. Fifty qualified voters attended the meeting. The Installation Service was held in June. A fine dinner was served by the ladies for about thirty people. The weather was stormy; it rained hard but the Church was more than half filled.

A special series of Revival Meetings was planned for the fall of 1930. These meetings were preceded by Cottage Prayer Meetings and neighboring ministers participated. The Moody book "The Way to God" was distributed and the "Revival Gem" song book was used at the services.

A Board of Deacons was brought into being in April, 1931. Elected to serve on this board were Thomas B. Miller, Townsend Robertson, and Floyd S. Terhune. The 125th Anniversary was celebrated with appropriate services on May 22 and 23.

1932. At that time the church building was newly painted and encircled by well kept grounds.

The effects of the Depression were severely felt by December, 1932, when the reduced income of the Church made it necessary to lower the salaries of the pastor, organist, and sexton by ten percent. The budget for 1933-1934 was as follows: Minister \$1620.00, Sexton \$180.00, Music \$108.00, Benevolences \$75.00, Repairs \$100.00, Presbytery Assessments \$22.00, Insurance \$65.00, Pulpit Supply \$40.00, Light and Heat \$60.00, Pension Fund \$155.00, and Miscellaneous \$60.00. That year the Women's Guild raised \$370.00 and the Missionary Society \$72.00. All were faithfully working together during a very trying and difficult period. There were 94 communicant members and 55 Sunday School members and teachers. The following year the budget was reduced still further. Elder Thomas M. Miller then proposed the adoption of the "Every Member Canvass" plan. This proposal was favorably received. In January, 1935, Mr. MacMurray voluntarily agreed to accept no salary for half of the month of February. The sudden death of this faithful servant of the Lord came as a great shock only a few weeks later.

The congregation was without a pastor until June, 1935, when the Rev. Lewis Gaston Leary, D.D. was invited to fill the pulpit for one year at a salary of \$1320.00. Under his able leadership a Young People's Society was organized and a set of by-laws for the government of the congregation was adopted. In January, 1936, the congregation issued a unanimous call for the services of Dr. Leary as their pastor. The salary was set at \$2000.00. An interesting note appears in the Session minutes of April, 1936. "The Session resolved to request the congregation, including the elders, not to converse in the church vestibule before services, but to go directly to their pews and bow their heads in prayer, and then after the services to be exceedingly cordial in greeting one another and in welcoming strangers".

The records of this period reflect the vigorous and devoted leadership of Dr. and Mrs. Leary. The Sunday School grew rapidly. The Christian Endeavor Society, under the guidance of Mrs. Chester Pulis, reached a maximum attendance of 53. The Missionary Society had ten members and the Women's Guild, with Mrs. Walter Terhune as President, was contributing generously to the support of the church and its program. In the fall of 1936 the ladies offered to re-decorate the church. The work was done at a cost of \$400.00. The first service in the beautifully renovated Church was to have been the Easter Service in April, 1937, but in the Providence of God the first service was the funeral

of Elder George E. Thorn, the beloved senior officer and oldest member of the Church.

In June, 1937, the pastor was given authority to proceed with the organization of a Boy Scout troop. During this period the Church had a choir under the leadership of Mrs. George H. Schackley. There was also a Men's Club of which Floyd S. Terhune was President. The Boy Scouts became very active under scoutmaster Jack MacKinnon.

At the Annual Meeting in April, 1942, sexton Henry Wilson was presented with a framed testimonial to his faithful service for 47 years. In the passing of Mrs. Walter S. Terhune, the church organist for more than forty years, the Church lost another faithful worker. Her memory was honored in September, 1945, when a new Hammond Organ was dedicated to the glory of God. Mrs. Marshall Stewart succeeded her as the organist.

The world was at war in 1942 and many of the men were serving with the Armed Forces. It was the custom of the congregation to stand during the prayer for our country and our boys in the service, and to follow the prayer with the singing of the last verse of "America". On August 19, 1945, in accordance with the Presidential Proclamation, a special Victory Service was conducted.

At the Annual Meeting of April, 1945, the pastor gave a brief report on the progress of the Church during the ten years of his pastorate. Receipts for congregational expenses had risen from \$1957.00 to \$3811.00; for benevolences from \$53.00 to \$806.00; Sunday School enrollment from 81 to 105; and Church membership from 97 to 184. A number of people who came into positions of leadership at this time, continued in them for many years. Among them were Mrs. Keith Terhune as Superintendent of the Junior Department and Mrs. Chester Pulis as Treasurer of the Women's Guild. Elder John Royle was the Benevolence Treasurer, Mrs. Stanley Colfax, Secretary of the Sunday School; Mrs. Ralph A. Smith, Chairman of the Cemetery Committee; Mrs. Ira Davenport, Treasurer of the Sunday School; Mrs. Fred Hall, President of the Women's Guild; and Mrs. Lewis G. Leary, President of the Women's Missionary Society. Mrs. Gilbert Terhune, Sr. was the Chairman of a Building Improvement Fund in which there was a growing interest.

The war stricken world was appealing for help in 1946 and this church contributed generously to the Restoration Fund. A program to take care of long delayed repairs and improvements of the church buildings was also undertaken. The

Women's Guild helped with a gift of \$1868.00. The Girl Scouts became active during this period and arrangements were made to give them a meeting place. Mrs. Charles E. Green served as the organist from December, 1945, to June, 1948. When the Green family moved out of the community, she was given a gold plated key to the organ in appreciation of her services. Mrs. Harry H. Michelfelder was chosen to be the new organist.

The Every Member Canvass of October, 1949, was one of the best to that date. Nine teams contacted the families of the congregation with the result of a net total increase of \$768.00 for Current Expenses and a net total increase of \$239.00 for Benevolences. The committee members were Thomas Hunt, Chairman, John E. MacKinnon, Jr., and Mrs. Donald Sly.

Notice of the passing of former pastor Rev. Reuben Markham in Washington on December 30, 1948, was received and acknowledged. The use of the Parish Houses for social activities of the young people increased. Among the younger organizations were the I'll Try Girls, The Junior Guild, and the G. M. S. The pastor's failing health during the summer of 1950 was a matter of great concern to the congregation. It was hoped that a long winter vacation might be helpful, but after a lingering illness Dr. Leary was called from this life on May 27, 1951.

Rev. Herbert E. Macdonald, long active in the Church both as a layman and as an ordained minister, served as the Moderator until a new pastor was chosen. At a congregational meeting on August 26, 1951, Rev. Theodore A. Rath of Frenchtown, N. J. was given a unanimous call. He began his pastorate as a Stated Supply in October, 1951. At this time the congregation was considering the desirability of being transferred to Newton Presbytery. When it became apparent that no Presbytery action would be taken, Mr. Rath became a member of Jersey City Presbytery and was installed as pastor of this Church on October 28, 1952.

Under the fine leadership of Rev. and Mrs. Theodore A. Rath the Church entered into a new era of growth and expansion. Many changes in administrative procedure were instituted. In 1953 the Rotation System for Elders, Deacons, and Trustees was adopted. A Church Council was formed, consisting of all the Church Officers and representatives of the organizations. Eight o'clock services were conducted every Sunday morning during July and August.

In October, 1952, the desire of a group of people in the Erskine Lake area to organize a new church, came to the atten-

tion of the Session. The pastor was willing to give them his help and the idea was favorably received. The Erskine Lake congregation grew rapidly and within a year their Church was incorporated. Arrangements were developed to serve the new Ringwood Community Church and the West Milford Church with the help of an assistant pastor. The idea of a Parish was carefully considered with the result that this plan of operation was officially established on June 1, 1954.

In January, 1953, the West Milford congregation voted to combine the Session and the Board of Trustees into one body of nine members. From time to time there were discussions about the possibility of expanding the physical facilities of the Church. In December, 1954, Neil S. Greydanus was employed as the architect for the proposed Parish House. Preliminary plans were presented to the congregation and approved on March 20, 1955. The Oak Ridge Presbyterian Church became a member of the West Milford - Ringwood Parish in July, 1955. At a special congregational meeting on November 27, 1955, the Parish House building program and the campaign plans for it were presented and approved. Thereafter the work went forward steadily. The Enlarged Sanctuary and Parish House were dedicated to the glory of God on Sunday, July 29, 1956.

At this time the pastor was giving consideration to an invitation to become the Executive of the Synod of New Jersey. He advised the Session of his forthcoming resignation on August 3, 1956. The resignation was accepted with regret and in due time a committee for the selection of a new pastor was chosen. On August 12, 1956, the Parish relationship with Ringwood and Oak Ridge was discontinued by mutual consent.

On October 14, 1956, the congregation gave Rev. Albert H. Manus of Lakewood, N. J. a unanimous call to become their pastor as of November 15, 1956. The call was accepted and a new pastoral relationship was established. The Installation Service was conducted on the evening of December 9, 1956. Mr. and Mrs. Manus and their two sons, Albert and David, were graciously received by the congregation, and the response to their leadership has been encouraging. Preparations for the annual Christmas celebration were under way when the new pastor came, and he was happy for this opportunity to meet the young people and children. After the first of the year Communicant Classes were organized for young people and adults with the use of the latest audio-visual aids. The Church has been strengthened by the reception of many new members. A Junior Choir was developed during the winter months and the children have inspired the congregation with their fine singing.

Much attention has been given to strengthening the program for the Junior High and Westminster Fellowship young people. Perhaps the most significant forward step has been the transition of the work of our women from separate organizations to the Women's Association Plan recommended by the National Council of Presbyterian Women.

As we contemplate the years of our history we are deeply grateful to God for His mighty works. We are humbled by the thought that generations have come and gone, and that we too are only a part of the procession of the ages. A voice out of the distant past seems to speak to us and we bow our heads to pray with him.

Lord, Thou has been our dwelling place

In all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth,

Or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world,

Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

For a thousand years in Thy sight

Are but as yesterday when it is past.

And as a watch in the night.

Thou carriest them away as with a flood:

they are as a sleep:

In the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up:

In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

The days of our years are threescore years and ten:

And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years.

Yet is their strength labor and sorrow:

For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

So teach us to number our days,

That we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us:

And establish Thou the work of our hands upon us:

Yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.

— Psalm 90

MINISTERS

1821 - 1956

Jacob Tuttle 1821-1832

Joseph C. Moore 1833-1836

Ebenezer Mc Dowell 1837-1838

Joseph C. Moore 1839-1843

Cornelius C. Conkling 1843-1846

Daniel Higbie 1847-1852

William H. Magie 1852-1854

James H. Board 1858-1859

William L. Moore 1859-1860

James H. Board 1860-1865

S. S. Goodman 1867-1879

J. Thompson Osler 1881-1907

Reuben Markham 1909-1912

Albert Chamberlain 1912-1913

Daniel Schauss 1915-1916

Henry Kauffman 1917-1918

Rudolph Meier 1918-1922

A. E. Albertson 1923-1924

Archibald Blue 1924-1926

Daniel Lorentz 1926-1928

Russell Dierdorff 1928-1929

John Mc Murray 1930-1935

Lewis G. Leary 1935-1951

Theodore A. Rath 1951-1956

Albert H. Manus 1956-