

"CHILLISQUAQUE HISTORY"

BY H. C. FINNEY

&

**"HISTORY OF THE
CHILLISQUAQUE CHURCH"**

BY J. K. MURRAY

**PRESENTED IN CELEBRATION
OF 100 YEARS OF WORSHIP
& WITNESS IN POTTS GROVE
MAY 28-30, 1993**

INTRODUCTION

Chillisquaque Presbyterian Church has a long, rich history, tracing its beginnings back to when Scotch Presbyterians first settled in this area. That history has been presented in detail in Chillisquaque by Rev. W. G. Finney, most recently revised and published in 1986.

On the occasion of celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the completion and dedication of the present church edifice in Potts Grove, we have decided to make other historical resources more widely available. We are very grateful to Beatrice Clewell, who has put together a detailed summary of the Auditor's Book which begins in 1851 and ends in 1915.

Within the pages of this document are two other resources, H. G. Finney's sermon, "CHILLISQUAQUE HISTORY" (pages 2-16) and J. K. Murray's "HISTORY OF THE CHILLISQUAQUE CHURCH" (pages 17-18).

H. G. Finney's sermon was originally written and preached in 1876 to mark the Centennial of our nation. We are deeply indebted to Rev. Joseph J. Thompson for reproducing this historic document in 1961 while he was serving as pastor of the Chillisquaque Church. Rev. Thompson included this note on the document's cover in the way of explanation:

The text of this sermon has come down to us in its original manuscript- written by the hand of H. G. Finney. Because the years have changed certain procedures in handwriting, portions of Mr. Finney's sermon are unreadable. You will find this symbol (????) appearing in the places where this was the case. The original spelling of the manuscript has been retained throughout, however, there may be instances where the misspelling is the fault of a typewriter with too much "original sin."

I have reproduced Rev. Thompson's printed version of the Finney sermon, with the only changes being the correction of obvious misspellings.

The second document included here is J. K. Murray's "HISTORY OF THE CHILLISQUAQUE CHURCH," written in 1903 while he was serving on the Session. As Mr. Murray indicates, the Session had requested that a brief summary of the Chillisquaque Church's history be recorded. Part of the reason for this was no doubt the sad loss of the Session Book containing the minutes of the Session from 1887-1900, due to a fire in the home of the Clerk of Session, J. Y. McGinnes. Of special interest is Mr. Murray's next to the last paragraph which gives us a few details about the building of our present church edifice.

It is hoped that in making these documents widely available two purposes will be served: more people will learn about the rich heritage of the Chillisquaque Church; and the likelihood of future generations having access to these documents will be greatly increased.

As H. G. Finney states in his challenging conclusion: "And now, the history of the church for coming years is in your hands, and you will make it what it will be."

-Leslie H. Drayer,
May 28, 1993.

"CHILLISQUAQUE HISTORY"

Sermon- by H.G. Finney

Preached at Old Chillisquaque, 1876

To my hand has fallen the task of recording the history of the Presbyterian Church of this place(Pottsgrove) for the century throughout which it has had existence. We are never to question the wisdom of divine Providence; yet that wisdom is, to us, often a measurable deep. That which could have been accomplished, with comparative ease, by either of the first two pastors, cannot be done by any living man. Many among you will sincerely and deeply regret the neglect, which allowed to pass unimproved the only period in which a full and correct, and therefore, fully satisfactory history of this church could have been written. Because of this neglect many things of first interest connected with its history, which even a score of years ago developed, were living and present, in memories of a few of the fathers, who then still lingered among you, have now entirely passed away, and it is impossible to recall them.

To me no less a disappointment than a surprise is the fact which a careful inquiry has disclosed, that the Church is in possession of no records, of any nature, (being dated) earlier than the year 1840; a period of nearly thirty six years- scarcely more than the third of the entire time of its life.

All that is left to me is to gather carefully and with discrimination, what I can, from diverse, and sometimes, contradictory testimony, of the failing memories of a few more aged members.

Placed where we are, of the God of our Fathers and our God, in infinite mercy, in the possession of peaceful enjoyment of our "goodly heritage,"- citizens of this vast Republic, which stands, as today it does, among the first nations of the earth, and second to none, in all that constitutes national greatness, power, and prosperity; of amazing development and wealth in all the products of human intellect and industry, the one hundredth anniversary, of whose existence, we celebrate this year. We find it no easy thing to take in fully the impressive and instructive fact, that only one hundred years ago a time which is almost within the memory of men still living, our Fathers came into these valleys to chose a home for themselves and posterity, to find them covered with native forests, still standing in all their unbroken, vast, awful grandeur- inhabited only by tribes of human savages who roamed and yelled and fought through them, sharing their vast domain with none but the wild beasts.

The first surveys and settlements appear to have been made in the Summer and Autumn of 1769. There may have been settlements still earlier than that year, I can, however, gain no knowledge of any. Those who first came were chiefly of Scotch-Irish descent. They were Presbyterians. This was the Church of their Fathers. It was the Church of their own choice. True to their Father's God and their own convictions, among the first objects which claimed their attention in their new home, was a sanctuary, where they

might assemble themselves together to worship God and seek His blessing. It was a most interesting point in the history of the Church.

Exactly when and where did those brave, earnest men and women, who have been long sleeping in the old graveyard- but then full of youthful vigor and hope, first gather together for the worship of God; and did those old solemn forests for the first time echo to the sweet, soothing, elevating, strains of Christian Psalmody, and the earnest more impressive words of prayer to the only living and true God- the Father, in the all- prevalent name of the only mediator between God and man- our Lord Jesus Christ? Questions of touching interest, but which no record, or living man can now answer. The supposition that it was, amid the trees and bushes, on this very hallowed spot, is cherished.

The names of the persons, who appear to have been among the first settlers and members of the Church are: Moody, Murray, McKnight, McMahan, Ireland, Wilson, Sheddan, Harvey, Huitt, Johnson. Nearly all of these families are represented in the membership of the church at the present day, although many of their descendants are scattered. Other names become prominent in the progress of the church's history.

Tradition, which I consider entirely reliable, makes this house the third one, which has been erected and occupied by the Congregation. The first was a log-building of small dimensions and humble appearance. It cannot be known in what year it was built. In the possession of one of the members of the church are the letters patent of the ground, which is owned by the Congregation. In this document it is stated that the 12 acres were "surveyed in pursuance of a warrant dated 22nd September 1774 granted to Robert Moody, William McKnight and William Murray, and the said William McKnight, and Robert Moody are since deceased, whereupon at a meeting of the Chillisquaque Congregation dated the 2nd of July 1805 the said Joseph Wilson and Hugh Regnor were chosen as trustees in lieu thereof." From this paper it appears that these three men, at that date, 22nd September 1774, were acting as trustees of the Congregation. The little log church may have been erected before that date. If not we have no reason to doubt it was done soon after; probably that Fall. What they would need to put it up, would not be a collection of money, but of men, of muscle and "a mind to work." And such were the men of those times.

But the patient searcher for the solid matters of fact, I imagine, is ready earnestly to ask, "But tell us when the church was formally organized?" Not improbably never in the precise sense in which churches in our more highly favored times are organized. As we have already seen it had trustees, September 22nd 1774. Most probably, it had also Ruling Elders at that time. Tradition gives 1773 as the date of the organization of the church at Buffalo Crossroads. This church may have been organized the same year.

This church with all others of the region originally belonged to the Presbytery of Donegal. The Rev. A.D. Mitchell, in whose possession are the records of the old Donegal Presbytery, kindly informs me, that there is no record of the organization of the church of Chillisquaque;

but its name appears on the records as early as 1774. Mr. Mitchell adds, "I may say, that our Fathers had a queer way of doing things. Churches seem to have come into existence without any formal organization. I do not remember to have noticed the record of a single organization prior to 1800." The supplies which were appointed by the Synod, appear to have been authorized to form a people into a congregation, when they considered the way to be clear. I have no doubt it was thus this church came into existence.

Neither can it now be certainly known, who had the honor of first preaching Christ and Him crucified on this sacred spot, where for a century, and more the everlasting Gospel has been proclaimed; where many souls have been born again, and have grown in Christ and finished their course with joy; where many of you first learned to love Him, who is the chiefest among ten thousand.

From the minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, it appears that at an early date appointment of supplies were made for the frontier settlements and the Indians of this province. At the meeting of the Synod in May, 1774, Mr. Latta was appointed to supply up the west branch of the Susquehanna five Sabbaths in the months of October and November, and Mr. Samuel Dongal seven Sabbaths in July and August. Most probably, both these men gave this church a day's preaching.

The oldest record, however, of which I can gain any knowledge, in which it is expressly stated, that the supply was to preach in this Church is the Journal of Rev. Philip V. Fithian. On June the 20th 1775 he attended a meeting of the Presbytery of Donegal, at Mt. King's Meeting House (next word is unreadable) West Conococheague. He was appointed as a missionary to preach the 4th Sabbath of June at Cedar Spring; 1st Sab. of July at Northumberland town; 2nd at Buffalo Valley; 3rd at Warrior Run, 4th at Bald Eagle and 5th at Chillisquaque. These appointments he fulfilled.

I must give you a few extracts from this Journal. "Sunday, June 23rd, Cedar Spring, Cumberland Co., Pa. A large and genteel Society, but in great and furious turmoil about a Mr. Kenedy who was once their preacher. Poor I was frightened, as one of the society when asked to set the tune answered, that he knew not whether, I was a Baptist, or a Methodist, or a Papist, or a Seceder. I soon made him acquainted with my authority. It is now sunset and I am writing under a dark tuft of willows and sycamores close to the bank of the beautiful water of the Juniatta. What are my thoughts, fair genius of this water, O tell me, will not this in some future time, be a vast, pleasant and very populous country! Are not many large towns to be raised on thy shady banks?— I seem to wish to be transported forward only one century. Great God! America will surprise the world." We are living exactly where he seemed to wish to be. His questions we have heard answered, his prediction we have seen more than fulfilled.

"Sunday, July 9th Buffalo Valley. The people are building a log meeting house up the valley four miles from the river. There is here a numerous society." He preached among the trees. "The Assembly was attentive. I could not

avoid smiling at the new appearance, to see them peeping at me through the bushes."

"July 12, 1775, arrived at Warrior Run. This meeting house is on the bank of the river. It is not yet covered. A large assembly gathered. I preached from a wagon the only one which was present." But here the copy of the part of the record, which has been put in my hand stops. A little too soon for us. However, as the paper states, he filled all these appointments. Sabbath July 30th, 1775, he was at Chillisquaque. He preached in the little new-log meeting house, if it was here. If not, among the bushes, as he did to our neighbors. A marked contrast to our meeting today. Some have come a long way- six, eight, ten miles. Men and women come on horseback, many fathers and mothers, with their children, and carrying babes, walk, some of them for miles. Through miles of deep dark woods along Indian paths they have come. Weary many of them must have been. They are eager to hear every word. They are hungry for the Gospel. They may not have had the opportunity to hear a sermon for many months. I do hope Brother Fithian gave them a good sermon, full of Christ. On the strength of it, probably they would have to go for many another month. Comparatively a little matter is it, if we lazy people of today do get a poor sermon, who are not willing to walk two miles, not even from Pottsgrove, to worship God and hear his Gospel.

Oh! those were fearful times. The gravest questions were to be answered, a mighty problem solved by the people of this country. The war of Revolution had already been opened. Only on the 17th of the last month, June, had the ever memorable battle of Bunker Hill been fought. The whole country was aroused. A great conflict of emotions stirred the soul of every thoughtful man and woman of the land. What a terrible undertaking. Think of their poverty and weakness; think of England wealthy and power(ful). Mr. Fithian speaks of the gathering of troops for the war. Riflemen from 50 miles up the river came into Northumberland town, on the 29th of June. It was Saturday, the day before he preached there.

The men of this church had a place among the officers and in the rank and file of those heroic armies. "Men who knew their duty, and knowing dared maintain."

Col. James Murray, whose son William Murray, is still among us, was a brave and efficient officer. He was in the army through almost the entire eight years of the war. Another of the old heroes of this church was Major James McMahan. He was Sargent of the 2nd battalion of Pa. during 1763 and 1764. That was before he came to this region. He was a Capt. throughout the war of Revolution, during 1778 and 1779 he was also assistant wagonmaster. His grandchildren and great-grandchildren are with us.

In the old graveyard reposes the dust of those brave men. And doubtless with them are lying there the mortal remains of many other soldiers of that war, whom a great nation would delight to honor, but whose graves cannot now be found or marked. The only exception is David Hammond, "a soldier of the Revolution."

Imagination cannot conceive the perils with which the early settlers of this country were surrounded. Never could

they have a consciousness of security, save through a trust in the Lord of Hosts. The vast forests which surrounded them on all sides, were the lurking place of the savage, treacherous, merciless Indian. Any hour of the night or the day in overpowering numbers they might be upon them. When leaving home, they could hardly ever be sure it would not be to find, upon returning, their wives and children put to the scalping knife, or which was perhaps even worse, carried captive by the savages and their homes in ashes. When they enjoyed the sure and precious privilege of meeting in their little church for worship, or when they went out into their little stumpy field to reap their small crop, they must take their rifles along, for defense against the scalp king, Evil Joe. Time came when the ever present danger seemed so greatly to increase, they had to leave their homes and flee to one of the small forts, which the government had caused to be constructed along the river, probably it would be to Fort Augusta, at Sunbury. That seems to have been the strongest one among them.

One of the fathers among us today tells me that his own maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Desham, while fleeing with their babe for safety to one of the forts were overtaken by some Indians. The child was killed, his wife was left, as it was supposed, dead. And Mr. Desham was taken captive. Some friends found her lying there still alive. They took her to Fort Augusta. she recovered. Her husband some years afterward either escaped, or was exchanged, and for many years afterward they lived as members of this church. Another father among us tells me, that Grandfather and Grandmother Cury were riding along a path through the woods on the other side of Montour Ridge, when attacked by some savages. First his horse is shot and he is murdered and scalped; soon after her horse meets with a similar fate and she is caught and led away over the mountain several miles distant. But the following night she escapes and reaches her little home the next morning, where her little children, the eldest seven, had stayed alone. He knows nothing of such experience.

One day, of one of the years of the war, the sad news started through the congregation that their church was in ashes. A company of cowardly Indians had set it on fire. The people had worked hard in their poverty to get it. It was yet new. It was a precious place- the house of God to more than a few of the people. Tears were shed as they told and heard a sad story. Thus were they called to pass through many changes and trials. For years they were without any building. During those years of war, sacrifice and suffering, it is likely they had but little preaching. Whenever a minister did make the perilous journey through the woods to give them a day's preaching, they would meet and worship here among the trees.

Mr. John McMahan, now of Vineland, New Jersey, had kindly sent on (to me a) copy of an original paper of subscription taken up in the Chillisquaque congregation. The date is March 29th, 1786. The paper has 133 signatures, 132 males and one female. The whole amount subscribed is 77 Pounds, 7 Shillings and 6 Pence. The object is not

mentioned. I think it must have been the erection of the second church.

And now we are nearing the period when the church is to be blessed of God with its first pastor, one whom in the providence of God is to hold that sacred relationship to it for many years. The war is over. Our armies are victorious over the mighty enemy. Independence is ours and peace reigns. This region is at length cleared of that dreaded, treacherous foe- the poor Indian. The brave men, of those brave armies, who still service the eight long years of terrible conflict, return covered with real honors, to their friends and homes. Lasting honor to the heroes! And the wheels of industry and enterprise move on.

In 1786, the Presbytery of Carlisle was formed, when this Church became connected with it. In the year 1789, as it appears in the Autumn, Mr. John Bryson, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Carlisle, visited by invitation of the Congregations of Warrior Run and Chillisquaque. When making the journey up the river, upon horse-back, to his home and field of labor for more than half a century, at Northumberland town he was told, that by a bridle-road, he could get over the mountain, into the Chillisquaque Valley. This path he took. On his way down the side of the mountain he came upon some men who were opening a wagonroad over the mountain. Maybe some of them to be his spiritual sons. He asked the way to the house of Mr. Strawbridge. A son of Mr. S. who was of the company, introduced himself to Mr. Bryson, and leaving his fellow-road makers accompanied his future pastor to his father's house. A place well known to most of you. Mr. Bryson's first Sabbath was at Chillisquaque. I have been told by one of your number, that he, with others, heard Mr. Bryson, while standing out there by the graveyard wall, (they) say that he preached his first sermon in the church; it was unfinished. He had a box for a pulpit, and a little board nailed before him, on which to lay the Bible and hymnbook. There was no floor in the house. The people sat on the sleepers. The Church at Warrior Run was at the same time in a similar state. It was up and covered, but without a floor. It is probable, then, that the second house was erected in the year 1789. We cannot tell how long they had to do without the luxury of a floor. This edifice stood on the south side of the present one. How glad it was to discover the very line of its foundation. It was built of logs.

By the kindness of Rev. John P. Hudson, I have been furnished with a copy of the call of Mr. Bryson from these churches. It is signed by 109 heads of families, 42 Chillisquaque subscribers. The salary promised was 150 pounds Pennsylvania currency. The call was presented to the Presbytery and accepted by Mr. Bryson in October that year, and in December following, the 22nd day, he was ordained at Carlisle. He was installed Pastor of the Churches of Chillisquaque and Warrior Run, the 2nd day of June, 1791. It is a matter of regret that at no period during Mr. Bryson's pastorate can we know the number of church members. May 20th, 1794, the Presbytery of Huntingdon was organized, when Mr. B with the members of his charge, was transferred to that

Presbytery. The following is the heading of another subscription paper. "Chillisquaque Township, June 20th, 1796. Whereas Chillisquaque meeting house appears too small for the accommodation of all persons, who are applying for seats, it is agreed by a majority of the members, that it shall be enlarged by subscription, by whose names are here unto subscribed, do hereby oblige ourselves, to pay the sums affixed to our names. Maj. Jos. McMahan, Samuel Hibler are appointed to superintend the work. John McMillan, Jas. Richard, Robt. Giffen and Jas. McKnight are appointed collectors.

As the result of that effort, I suppose that edifice was soon after that date enlarged to the dimensions which it retained until it was removed. It was made higher, galleries were put within, and stairs on the outside which led to the gallery. The pulpit would, also, it is possible, be elevated to suit the hearers in the galleries.

At a future period the house was plastered, both within and without, and white washed; and the stairs to the gallery removed from the outside and put within. As thus repaired and improved it remained until it gave place to this house.

The first elders of the Congregation, of whom there is any recollection, and probably the first of all, were James Sheddan, James McKnight, and David Ireland. Additions were made to the Session at different times, during Mr. Bryson's pastorate. It may be impossible for any one now to give the names of all the men, who through the grace of God held office during the ministry of Mr. Bryson. Neither can the exact date, or order of their election be stated. Succeeding the three venerable Fathers, whose names we have already mentioned, and may be in order in which we mention them were John Murray, and John Ireland, then William Sheddan, Jas. McMahan, Robert Simington, and Jas. Derham, then Richard Wilson and Jas. F. Murray.

In the month of May 1811 the Synod of Philadelphia constituted the Presbytery of Northumberland, composed of the ministers and churches in the counties of Union, Northumberland, Montour, Columbia, Lycoming and Clinton. On the 3rd day of December of the year 1811 the Presbyterian Church of Milton was organized by the Presbytery of Northumberland. This materially decreased the membership of this church.

The Thirteenth day of June 1820, the Female Missionary Society of Chillisquaque was organized, auxiliary to the Milton Missionary Society. The 2nd article of the Constitution of the Society is as follows: "The object of this society shall be to aid the Milton Missionary Society with its funds, with a view to promote the preaching of the Gospel among the destitute." This Society has been living and at work, though doubtless not always with the same measure of zeal and faithfulness, ever since, a period of 56 years. During these years it has been the sole agent for collecting the church funds for Foreign Missions.

In the month of May, 1827, the constitution of the Chillisquaque Bible Society was adopted and the Society organized. The objects of this Society as stated in the 2nd article of its constitution were: "To supply ourselves and

families fully with the S.S., to ascertain by actual inquiry how (many) Bibles are needed in the vicinity, and to supply that need, and when these ends shall have been accomplished, to leave the funds in the hands of the parent institution to be by it expended in disseminating the Word of God throughout the world." This Society continued to meet annually, until 1864. Since that date it has ceased to act, and, may it not be added, even to live.

The Presbyterian Church of Mooresburg was organized in the year 1836. At its organization 37 members were received upon certificate and 9 upon profession of faith. Making its membership at first 46. These were chiefly from this church.

As the privilege of even once meeting with the people of God in the old church, or looking upon it was never mine, I desire now to let one speak to you of it who did often, with some of you, enjoy that privilege. I give you a reminiscence written by one of its own honored and esteemed sons, the late Rev. S.S. Sheddan, D.D. "This is not the church that filled my boyish vision; that old white house, and its old worshippers have passed away. Upon this step let me sit and muse, and read some of the scenes that passed here, which site lingers in my memory. Nearly two score years have gone since, I was man enough to walk the two miles, that lay between my home and this Church. In those days of strict churchgoing, the boyish penance was staying at home, the indulgence- going to church. We came in at the north side of the graveyard. At that corner stood the old "study house," and close by the most honored tree, with the hook where the old pastor hitched his old horse. How often on a sinner's morning, have I come early, and not seeing Dominie's horse at that tree, or in the winding road up the hill, hurried to the spring then wandered through the grove until I was warned of the meeting time by the strong tide turning towards the church. Even now, I think I can see again old father B. as he came from the "study house," his head so white, his appearance so venerable, his step so slow! Mark a gentleman of the old school, as he stops to speak to that band of Scotch elders, who rise from that bench to welcome him. He neither uncovers his gray locks, nor touches his hat, but there is something in that peculiar bend, and the movement of his head, that no modern manners can surpass.

"Here stood the old house, its smooth wall made white, by a wash from that hill, seen through these trees. At this door we entered ascending six wooden steps. Wood was abundant then, and the seats had backs high enough to rest the sleepy head, whether it leaned backward, or forward.

"That first square box is not the pulpit. It is the clark's seat. The next story above, every way like the first, except the little back tabby-velvet cushion(a luxury then), is the pulpit. Their praise was neither instrumental nor modern. For many a day that man, whom I thought next to the preacher, in sanctuary importance, magnified his office of announcing the singing, and leading the song. I remember his nasal twang, and how I liked to hear them sing after the intermission. It was so lively then, and some raced with and outran the clark. Some graceless-limit of modern day might laugh, but their son was earnest and sincere.

"How distinctly the old church, with its occupants, rises before me. How stilled and unmoved that old elder sits! He must be three score years, and he has walked four miles. He came to hear and he is drinking in the sermon. What a number of devout fathers sit at the head of the pews! The fact is there is a great deal of nobility in this old church, the nobility of moral worth. Those hearers are generally devout. The weather is warm, and some, you see, have come without their coats. They all stand in the long prayer, and some, hard-working men grow drowsy, and stand awhile, during the sermon, to keep themselves awake.

"Times and things have changed, but let me muse a little longer, while the old church, its pews, its worshippers, its pastor all rise up before me. Once more I see and hear the things that were in days gone by. The punctual fathers are in their seats, their children with them. How familiar that invocation and morning psalm, and the clerk's cry, "(????)", that pitch, and then the whole house vocal with the strains! Who cares for art, where there is so much heartiness. The long prayer, I remember well, but let me stand and hear it through. Rich gospel sermon, and how those old fashioned (folks) loved it. The Communion Sabbath was once a year, and retained its solemn awe. Those four day meetings I like. Strange ministers and members from adjoining churches were there. It was a great occasion. Two sermons on Friday, one on Saturday, two on Sabbath, and one on Monday, were less wearisome then. (More) than thirty attended (the) lecture of Saturday, and brief service of Sabbath now. The session- old men, and mostly Scotch- so grave, so devout! Then when the old pastor came, his head seeming more white, his step more solemn accompanied by father P____, with his gentle smile and benign countenance- the man who was my boyish picture of John the beloved disciple. When these two went up to that second platform, I felt we were gathered for holy purposes.

"Times have changed and we have changed with them. This new house is neat, its seats are comfortable, but I cannot find our pew. I cannot see where the elders sit, they have changed their seats. O! I see now, they are not here. That old man across the aisle, that man with his pew full of children, I saw him baptized. The fathers of my day are not here; they have met in the churchyard and wait there for the gathering of the children. How the congregation of the dead, has increased! Here our family lie. The place is becoming crowded. Here are those I missed from my home of childhood.

Church of my boyhood can you tell me about my early companions? Can you tell how those have lived who moved away, those with whom I so often said to Father B. the catechism? Can you tell how those died, that are buried here with their Fathers? O! if the record is dark, be silent, eternity will be soon enough for the revelation. There are many records belonging to the old church, which are only in heaven's keeping. With these good fathers, with many of their children, we hope again to worship and join in that new song. But the heart is sad at the mere possibility that some who were my early companions here, were baptized by the same hand, went with me up these steps, and heard of the same dying love may not meet with us in the great day of assembling, or be

with those who on that day our pastor shall bring with him."

I cannot ascertain in what year the Sabbath School was organized, but from what one of our old members tells me of her recollections of it, it may have been 40 years or more. It has never been large, never attended by nearly all the children of the church, the homes of families being too far from the church for their attendance. For many years, a number of the church members and many of the children and youth of the families of the congregation, living near to the Centre Church, were connected with a union S.S. held in that church. As at present time some of our members are at work, and our young people are scholars in the Union S.S. of Pottsgrove. Few of our church members are there, who have not in their most impressable years, been students of the word of God in some one of these schools.

At length the old pastor, had yield to infirmities of age and give place to another. In the year 1840 he resigned the pastoral charge after having it almost fifty years.

It is interesting to know more of the life and character of this minister of ours who still lives in the grateful remembrance and strong affection of members who are spared with us to this present time; some of whom bear the seal of baptism as administered by his own hand, and others of whom, are his spiritual children, and will be his joy and crown of rejoicing in the presence of Jesus Christ at his coming. For this purpose I avail myself of a brief memoir penned by Rev. John P. Hudson.

"Born in Cumberland Co., Pa., in January A.D. 1758, John Bryson was the child of many prayers from a pious and widowed mother, under God, he received his earliest religious instruction and impressions. And she lived to see her son a devoted minister of the gospel of Christ.

"At the age of eighteen years, he was drafted as a militiaman in the Revolutionary service under the command of General Potter. His term of service was about six months. After this he applied himself diligently to a course of study in preparation for the gospel ministry. From childhood he had been of a serious and thoughtful turn of mind; but the precise time when first he indulged a hope in Christ, whether just before or immediately after his term of military service, is not certainly known.

"Mr. Bryson's classical studies were pursued, for the most part, under the tuition of the Rev. Dr. Waddell of Grange Co., Va. After finishing the course taught in Dr. Waddell's school, he took charge of the school and taught it successfully for two years. He then entered Dickinson College at Carlisle; then recently organized under the Presidency of Dr. Charles Nesbit. He was graduated in the first class formed and graduated in the Institution, and was one of the founders of a literary society at the college. His theological studies were conducted under the direction of Drs. John King and Robert Cooper. After being licensed to preach the gospel, he was employed as a missionary by the Presbytery of Carlisle, for a few months, during which time he labored in Martinsburg, Virginia and in the regions around about. He visited the congregations of Warrior Run and Chillisquaque and was soon after called to be their pastor.

"Soon after his settlement, on the application of the Presbytery by the people of the town of Danville, and with the approbation of his charge, he preached every third, or fourth Sabbath in that town, without pecuniary compensation. But his congregations becoming dissatisfied, after a few months he withdrew and gave the whole of his time to his two charges. The kindness of Mr. B.'s congregations in granting the people of Danville, for a time, a part of their pastor's services, was followed with happy results. They were strengthened and prepared for settling a minister and through the influence and exertion of Mr. Bryson, the amiable and venerable John B. Patterson was called by them, and long and successfully served them as pastor.

"As the boundries of the congregations of Warrior Run and Chillisquaque met and overlapped each other at Milton, Mr. Bryson, soon after he ceased preaching at Danville, made Milton one of the outposts, where he steadily preached, on the afternoon, or evening, at first, of every fourth Sabbath, and afterward of every alternate Sabbath. Mr. Bryson continued to preach steadily at Milton until December 1811, when, because of the increase of the population there it became necessary to organize a church. He retired and was succeeded by Mr. Hood who afterward became pastor of the Church at Milton.

"Being the only minister of our church for many years, in the forks of the Susquehanna, Mr. B. preached often on week days at Fishing Creek, and at different points, in what is now Columbia Co.; also at Muncy, and different places on the West Branch.

"Through the grace of our Lord, John Bryson was a laborious and zealous minister of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. He was eminently a man of prayer, serving the Lord with all humility of mind. During his long ministry, his charge was (blessed) repeatedly with times of refreshing. He was a mighty textuary. His sermons are (filled) with the most apposite quotations from the sacred Scriptures.

"Within the territorial boundries of his original charge are now the churches of Muncy, McEwensville, Watsontown, Milton, Warrior Run, Chillisquaque, and Mooresburg.

"With a Spirit chastened by manifold afflictions Mr. B. was peculiarly fitted to pour the oil of consolation into the wounded and contrite heart. In his private life the graces of Christian character shone with a delightful lustre.

"At length, as the gracious Master was leading his aged disciple, his beloved and honored saint, to the last trying experience on earth, the venerable minister essayed to give up the reins of his mind and gave the following testimony: "In closing my earthly pilgrimage, I leave the world under a firm conviction that the doctrines of grace, as set forth in the standards of our church, and which, as God has given me grace, I have endeavored to preach, are the pure doctrines of the gospel; and in full reliance on them, especially on the great and cheering truth, they prominently set forth, of the imputation of a (????) righteousness, received by faith alone. I enter the world of the spirits, and confidently commit my spirit to my merciful Redeemer and Judge, trusting that His righteousness is mine through faith which is by the operation of His Spirit."

"Early in the morning of the third day of August, 1855, at his residence, the spirit of Father Bryson returned to God, who gave it. In the month of January previous, he had entered the ninety-eighth year of his life."

The Rev. Daniel M. Barber began to minister to this church as a stated supply some time in the year 1840.

And now we meet with the first record of the Session. It is this: "May the 9th. 1840. The Session met. Present John Ireland, James McMahan and James F. Murray. When James F. Murray was chosen as Secretary for Session."

The roll of membership has, however, been kept in such an imperfect manner, that we are not able to tell what was (the) number of members of the church at any given time.

In the minutes of the Session we read, that, "in June 7th 1840, the Communion of the Lord's Supper was celebrated when 119 members communicated. On the 12th of March 1841 a protracted meeting was commenced in the Union Centre Church, by Mr. Barber in which he was assisted by a number of Brethren in the Ministry. It was a season of great spiritual joy and refreshing. Believers were quickened and many were hopefully converted." The following June 5th, sixteen members were added to the church, and the next day 157 were at the Lord's table. In 1842 the Congregation made application to the Presbytery for the whole of Mr. Barber's time to be given to Chillisquaque, Mooresburg, and the Centre Church. The Presbytery refused this request.

Mr. Barber, therefore, continued to supply the pulpits of Chillisquaque and Mooresburg, giving them half his time, until the year 1844 when he was installed over these churches as pastor for all his time.

This term of his pastorate here was of short duration. Receiving a call from the church of Jersey Shore, and being earnestly requested by the people to accept, he, as it appears, reluctantly, complied, and some time in the year 1846 his pastoral relation to this charge was dissolved by the Presbytery, and the call from Jersey Shore was by him accepted.

Rev. James Hamilton followed Mr. Barber as supply for about a year. The church, meanwhile united in a call to Mr. Hamilton to become pastor. This call was not unanimous and the Presbytery refused to put it into the hand of Mr. Hamilton.

Next came Rev. John Paris Hudson. He preached as stated supply, from the Spring of 1847 until the meeting of Presbytery April 1850. September 15th 1850 we again find Rev. D. M. Barber again moderating the session. On the 29th day of March 1851 the Congregation again chose Mr. Barber as pastor of the Church. This call was presented to Mr. Barber by Presbytery at its meeting in Williamsport, in April, and accepted by him. Accordingly, on the 13th day of May 1851, Rev. Daniel M. Barber was installed as pastor of the churches of Chillisquaque and Mooresburg. The opening sermon was preached by Rev. Mr. Ritterhouse and the charges to the pastor and people were delivered by Rev. P.B. Marr.

In the year 1852 eighteen persons were added to the church. Four of these remain with us today. May 31, 1852. At a meeting of the congregation, three additional Elders-

Messers Thomas Ireland, Samuel McNinch and Samuel McMahan, Jr. were chosen; and on June 12 following they were ordained and installed to the Eldership.

The present edifice 1853, dedicated Jan. 10, 1854.

In September 1855 occurs the following minute, "Rev. D. M. Barber gave notice to the Congregation that agreeable to an act of the General Assembly, it will be necessary to install Fleming Nesbit and Benjamine Simington, as Ruling Elders over the Church as they had been received from other churches." Mr. Fleming Nesbit was received in May of 1846, as a Ruling Elder and soon after that date, the same year, was chosen by this Church to act as Elder. Mr. Simington had been received as an Elder from the Church of Washington, White Deer Valley, in May 1854, and September 16th, the same year, was elected to act as Elder in this Church. These two Brethren had thus been acting as elders from the dates of their election. In compliance with the direction of the Assembly they were formally installed in September 1855.

Mr. Barber again resigned the charge, and his labor here closed in the Spring of 1858. His entire ministry to this church extended over about 18 years. During these years he served with commendable earnestness and fidelity (to) a devoted people. The Master placed upon his ministry the seal of His approbation. Hardly a year passed when there were not convictions and additions to the church. The entire number received into the church during those years appears to have been 115.

The following sketch of the history and character of this useful servant of the Lord, is an abridgement of his obituary as published in the "Presbyterian!" "The Rev. Daniel M. Barber was born on the 16th of March 1800. He graduated at Jefferson College, and received his theological training at Princeton Seminary. He was a man of strong faith coupled with great native energy, a genial character, possessed of cheerful disposition, and capable of making those with whom he came in contact feel that his presence and intercourse was a benefit to them. He was one of those strongly marked positive characters who, as public men, never fail to leave their impression upon those on whom their energies are expended. The churches among which he labored all reflect in a very marked degree, the image of Danl. M. Barber. His work was not temporary or transient, but effective and lasting. As a preacher he was clear, nervous, impressive, sometimes truly eloquent, and always independent, never intimidated by the fear of man, from speaking his mind on all great moral questions, or from exposing public immoralities and sins. As a Christian patriot, he took an active part in sustaining the government in its recent great struggle and did valuable service. As long as his health permitted he acted as chaplain of a regiment, and many a suffering soldier has had occasion to thank him for relief administered by his liberal hand.

"He departed this life at Milton, Pennsylvania, on the 30th of October, 1866, after a brief illness, in the 66th year of his age."

On the 18th day of April 1858 the Lord's Supper was administered to this church for the last time by its second pastor, Rev. D.M. Barber, assisted by Rev. Joseph Stevens and

Geo. H. Thompson. Beyond a doubt it was a sad occasion to many hearts, two days after that pastoral relationship was dissolved by Presbytery at Lewisburg. At the same meeting of Presbytery the coming pastor was licensed to preach the Gospel. Rev. E. D. Yoemans was Moderator of Presbytery.

In the early part of the summer of 1858, Mr. Charles H. Park came among you, and continued to preach as a supply until the 18th of January 1859. That day the Presbytery met in this house, and ordained Mr. Park, and installed him as pastor of the Churches of Chillisquaue and Mooresburg.

Mr. Park's pastorate has been so recent and is so fresh in the memory of most of you, that it hardly yet belongs to history. The winter of 1861 was one of remarkable religious interest in the congregation. In the month of February, twenty-one persons united with church on profession of faith and two on certificate. In May 1864 Mr. Samuel Bowdman was added to the Session. It appears that he served but about one year and a half when he removed by death. June the 5th 1869 Messers John Giffen and Robert Mack were added to the Session.

On account of declining health Mr. Park was compelled to ask the Presbytery at its meeting (in) Oct. 1870 to release him from the pastoral charge of the churches. His request was granted. At the request of the congregation Mr. Park continued to preach to you until the following Spring. During his ministry among you eighty four persons united with the church, either upon profession of faith or by certificate. On the 1st day of May 1871, the head of the church bade the venerable father (and elder James McMahan Sr.) to rest from his labors and enter into the joy of his Lord.

Next came Mr. E. P. Foresman, a licentiate, as a supply for one year from the 1st of May 1871. Shortly after Mr. Foresman's departure, Rev. P. B. Marr was engaged to supply the pulpit. Mr. Marr continued to preach to you until the Autumn of 1873.

December 14 1873 at the request of the session, the congregation met, when a call was made out for the Rev. Elias S. Schenck. Mr. Schenck's labors among you continued to about one year (ago). On account of a want of (???) and a growing dissatisfaction among the people, he was not installed, but left you.

This following the blight of years we have swept down over more than a century and have reached our own time. Only a little over a year have we sustained the relation of pastor and people. On Friday the 11th of June 1875, I was installed your pastor. Rev. Dr. Isaac Giser preached the sermon, Rev. Moore, S. H. Thompson and J. Johnson took part in the exercise. The following Sabbath was our first communion. In November 1875 the following persons were added to the Session: Messers James McMahan, Thomas Van Zant, William McMahan, and Hugh R. Montgomery. During the first year seventeen persons have been added to the church, four on certificate and thirteen on profession of faith. But four have been removed, two by death and two to another church by certificate.

And now, the history of the church for coming years is in your hands, and you will make it what it will be. The responsibility is no trifling one. The object is worthy of all your energies wholly sanctified. Christ's glory is involved, and eternal interest of immortal souls, some among you, some yet unborn. Paul's Lord and Master is yours, then only believe and go forward. Be men and women of faith and prayer, of purity of purpose and life; of earnest, never weaning Christian activity, of self-abnegation and entire devotion to the Lord who bought you, with holy enthusiasm ever watching for souls. Then will the church be clothed with the beautiful garments of salvation, she shall "be a burning and shining light," and in her light many shall walk and not stumble, and her history made by you shall be of peace, growth and real prosperity.

Thank God, my brethren, for your pious ancestry. They were not men of royal blood. Plain, untitled, simple-minded men were they. But their peaceful lives were marked by unostentatious piety, and the fruit of that piety you enjoy.

Thank God for the inheritance of precious doctrines, transmitted in their piety, the legacy of your fathers—doctrines that never dazzle by their brilliancy, but ever bless mankind. Love your church. Let not your life cast a stain upon it. Prove yourselves worthy of the sacred legacy, so costly that has come down to you through this departed century.

Well worthy of your vigilant guardianship, warmest affections, earnest prayers and devoted labors is this old church of your fathers, with its divine doctrines, with its long history, with the seal of God's approbation put upon it, in the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

-H.G. Finney, 1876

HISTORY OF THE CHILLISQUAQUE CHURCH

-written by J. K. Murray in 1903

At a meeting of Session held some time ago the writer was appointed a committee to look up the early history and organization of the Chillisquaque Church.

In entering upon the above duties, we have discovered that a very arduous labor had been undertaken owing chiefly to the fact that records in those early and troublesome times were very often omitted.

But from tradition handed down from Father to Son we have been informed that Chillisquaque Church originally spelled Gillisquaque was organized at least as early as 1773. And from records of the Donegal Presbytery by which it was organized we learn that the Chillisquaque Church was represented in that body in 1774. Some records also show that a Warrant granted by the State of Pennsylvania for a tract of land in Northumberland County, containing twelve acres was recorded the same year.

The writer has been searching by every means within reach including History of the Chillisquaque and Susquehanna valleys and of Northumberland County, but we have been unable to ascertain the exact day and year of its organization.

A parchment patent deed in the possession of the present Board of Trustees shows that a Warrant dated Sept. 22 1774 was granted to Robert Moody, Wm. McKnight and William Murray, Trustees and was laid upon a tract of land in Northumberland County called Hopewell.

Business did not move rapidly in those days as later on will be seen. So we infer that an organization was affected some time prior to (the) date of the above warrant.

The patent deed above referred to was granted to William Murray, Joseph Wilson and Hugh Resnor, succeeding Trustees dated July 2 1805 and signed by Thomas McKean Governor of Pennsylvania.

On this tract of land three Church edifices were erected. The first a small log structure built soon after securing the ground was burned by the Indians who spread terror through this valley, making it necessary to go armed to Church.

The second Church also log is supposed to have been built soon after the first was burned, on the same site, was not finished for many years, but was used without doors or windows closed, not even a floor in it, as some of the older members told the writer several years ago that he as a boy rode with his Father's family seven miles in winter and sat upon the sleepers without fire and listened to long sermons characteristic of that day.

As to supplies for the pulpit and members of the Session we gather the following information from the Centennial memorial of the Presbytery of Carlisle as copied from the records of the Donegal Presbytery in 1886 for its memorial and kindly furnished us by Dr. W. A. West of McConnelsville, Pa., Stated Clerk of Carlisle Presbytery. The Chillisquaque Church was under its care.

The above record says on the 22nd day of June 1775 Mr.

Philip Vicars Fithian, a Licentiate of the Presbytery of Philadelphia was appointed to supply several Churches in this part of the Donegal Presbytery among which were Northumberland, Buffalo Valley, Warrior Run, Bald Eagle, Chillisquaque and several others.

It may properly be inferred from Mr. Fithian's journal that there was an organized Church here before his visit to the place as he says he preached at James Murray's house on July 23, 1775, that there were sixty persons present and that one of the Elders gave him 15 shillings and 3 pence for supply.

The original Elders were James Sheddan, James McKnight and David Ireland. By the same records we get the following: Milton, Danville Grove, Washingtonville, Derry and Mooresburg Churches are the offshoot of the Chillisquaque Church.

We find no further records of supplies but minutes of General Assembly show the pulpit vacant in 1789. From the above records we also note that forty two names were attached to a call to Rev. John Bryson dated June 23 1790 and including such prominent men as Thomas Hewit, David Hammond, James McMahan, John Montgomery, William Murray, James Murray, William McCormick, Thomas Strawbridge, Robert Finney and others.

Mr. Bryson was installed the first Pastor of Warrior Run and the second Church at Chillisquaque Church on the second Wednesday June 8th 1791 and remained Pastor for fifty years, since which time with the exception of Revs. D. M. Barber. C. H. Park and H. G. Finney the term of the Pastorate has been short, mostly less than four years.

Dr. West sends us these bits of personal history. Rev. John Bryson was born in Allen Township, Cumberland County, Pa., Jan. 1, 1758. Graduated at Dickinson College, Carlisle, Sept. 26, 1787, was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Carlisle Oct. 8 1789, was ordained Dec. 22nd 1790 and installed Pastor as above June 8, 1791.

The third church, a brick building erected upon the same historic ground was built in 1853. The writer, with some of the older members and others of this locality, assisted as boys in placing material on the ground for which the cost was \$2500. The members, in moving from place to place, gradually centered around the village of Potts Grove and it became necessary to move the church. Steps were taken in that direction which resulted in the erection of the fourth church edifice, a substantial mountain stone structure in the above village and costing \$8650.58, which was built in 1892 and dedicated free of debt to the worship of God on Easter Sunday, the 2nd day of April, 1893.

It is a comforting thought that so many of the descendents of those early pioneers who suffered so much for their God and their country are still numbered in the membership of this church and that the mantel of the devoted men and women of that early day may fall upon Pastor and people of the present is the earnest prayer of the writer.