

GLADE RUN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND ACADEMY.

[Extract from historical sketch by rev. G. W. Mechlin, D. D.]

The writer in a graphic description of the pioneers, says: "The most reliable information now obtainable is that Rev. Robert McGarragh preached the first sermon ever preached in this region, in Wm. Marshall's barn or house, in 1803." "He was threading his way by Indian trail or settler's 'blaze' to the wide wilderness beyond the Redbank river to fold and feed the Great Shepherd's sheep, scattered and scattering there. To reach this broad parish he must ford or swim the Kiskiminitas, Crooked creek, Plum creek, Mahoning, Redbank and Clarion rivers, often with no small risk of life. Over this route on pack horses he removed his family, soon after he preached on the waters of Glade run."

"The savage war whoop had scarcely died away among these hills when Father McGarragh came to preach the gospel to the people here. * * * Each spring and autumn, for years, he passed back and forth through this neighborhood, and preached, as far as can now be learned at every visit. His appointments were marked by a pin placed at the date in the almanac in some families."

As early as 1804 there were at least four substantial Presbyterian families in this vicinity – James and William Kirkpatrick, William Marshall and William Shields. There may have been others. Out of these four families came the members that composed this church at its organization in 1808, by simply electing elders who were ordained by Mr. McGarragh," This date is fixed upon the recollection of Joseph Marshall, who died in 1859, nearly eighty years old; Hon. John Calhoun, who moved here in 1813, and William Kirkpatrick. There is no evidence to the contrary.

"James and Margaret Kirkpatrick, William and Mary Marshall, William and Martha Kirkpatrick, and William and Mary Shields were probably all the members at the organization, at least all whose names are now certainly known. It seems evident also that James Kirkpatrick and William Marshall were elders ordained at the organization.

"All the sessional records now known to exist, up to October 24th, 1836, consist of several loose papers preserved by the late George McCombs. The first is dated September 15th, 1821, and reads: 'Communicants for the first time, Margaret Marshall, John Marshall and his wife Martha, William Marshall and his wife Rebecca, Thomas Wilson, sr., Thomas Wilson, jr., James Marshall, jr., and Mary his wife, Rebecca Wait, Margaret Guthrie, Benjamin Irwin and his wife Margaret, Alexander Findley and his wife Catharine, Robert Marshall, Hugh Martin, John Marshall, sr., Moses Kirkpatrick, George Schat and Mary his wife, on examination; Wm. Travis and his wife Mary, Elizabeth Wilson, Thomas Wilson and his wife Mary, James Diven and his wife Nancy, were admitted by letters.' Others must have been admitted between the organization and this date. The late Joseph Diven wrote to me years before his death that he and George McCombs were ordained elders in 1820 by Rev. David Barclay." Another paper dated September 14, 1822, contains 21 names. Another reads 'Glade Run, July 24, 1825. The following persons were ordained ruling elders, viz; John Marshall, Benj. Irwin and William Kirkpatrick.' The same papers make the list of those in full communion in April, 1824, eighty-two. Another makes the number 107 in June, 1825. On admissions since, we quote again from Dr. Mechlin, his summary in 1867: "From the organization to June 3d, 1826, on examination, 117; during Dr. Barrett's pastorate of twelve years, 59; for the five years of the Rev. J. D. Mason, 32; for the seven years of Rev. C. Forbes, 68: equal to 276 in 1857." The amount received by certificate to this date not stated. From 1857 to 1876, under pastorate of Dr. Mechlin, there have been received on examination 281, and on certificate 131. Present membership 240.

Of the Elders already named James Kirkpatrick died April 22, 1839; William Marshall at 75 years, (by another record 72,) died April 28, 1832, Joseph Devin, probably prior to 1870; George McCombs, aged 76 years, February 17, 1859; Benjamin Irwin, aged 75 years, June 10, 1850; John Marshall, June 12, 1850. William Kirkpatrick still lives (1876).

The elders chosen subsequent to 1825 were Hon. John Calhoun, James Wilson and William Gaghagan, chosen sometime prior to 1836; Robert Wilson and Robert Caldwell, June, 1839; Thomas Travis, John Henderson, and Wm. M. Findley, May, 1844; Benj. Irwin, John Wadding and John C. McComb, March, 1851; Joseph McGaughey, James R. and Harkley K. Marshall, and William Guthrie, September, 1859; Samuel S. Caldwell and Archibald Findley, October, 1867. Of these, death has removed nine. Those living (1876) are Robert Caldwell, Irwin, Wadding, McComb, McGaughey, J. R. Marshall, S. S. Caldwell, and A. Findley.

As we have sketched the results of the pastoral labors, we will name the succession: Rev. Robert McGarragh; Rev. Jas. Gailbreath, who preached occasionally; Rev. David Barclay; Rev. Elisha Dow Barrett, M. D., 1828 to 1840, who still lives, and speaks of the precious revival in 1829, the records of which are lost; Rev. James D. Mason, 1843 to 1848; Rev. C. Forbes, 1849 to 1856. Rev. G. W. Mechlin, then a licentiate, preached his first sermon to the church immediately after Rev. Forbes, closed his labors, and was ordained and installed February 20, 1857, and since 1865 his full time has been devoted to this congregation. Prior to that time it was embraced in a charge with some other congregation.

"The first church building stood on ground ever since occupied for that purpose. It was 30 by 30 feet, of hewn logs, with shingle roof and board floor. * * * * * A subscription paper lately discovered by Mr. J. T. Irwin among the papers of his father, Benj. Irwin, for material, – called "implements" in the paper – for this house, is a novelty. The subscribers obligated themselves in this style: A. B., 5 logs; C. D., 5 logs; E. F., 'gits 5 pair of rafters'; W. C. and J. K. 'gits one summer,' and so on till walls, floor, and roof were provided for." This building was probably erected in 1821, for the material subscribed was "to be delivered to the committee on or before 1st day of May, 1821." The next building was erected in 1831, a frame, 44 by 54 feet, floored with oak boards as broad as could be obtained, and the walls were plastered. The pulpit stood well up to the ceiling, with stairs on each side, doors to close in the preacher, and window directly behind it. "This arrangement was well suited for reading sermons, to people prejudiced against this method of preaching. No one cared to look the window steadfastly in the face long enough to see whether the minister read his sermon or not." The church sexton at one time served at a salary of four dollars a year. It is not known when stoves were first introduced, but it is remembered they did not secure a place in the sanctuary without a struggle. In 1857 a new church was built, 48 by 60 feet, and enlarged in 1871 to 48 by 76 feet.

The Sabbath school was constructed in 1826, the first officers Joseph Reed, A. Findlay and John Calhoun. It has grown to a school now numbering 225 scholars, 17 teachers, conducted in modern style, with library and other appliances.

The Glade Run Academy, is an enterprise of this church. A general discussion of the subject led to the following action of the session, May 27, 1851: "To-day, session resolved, that measures to be adopted for opening a parochial school as soon as possible." Again, in the minutes of September 20, 1851, "the subject of a parochial school was further discussed, but no plan adopted," and "these are the only resolutions existing on paper, relating to Glade Run Academy, until the first Session opened, with Rev. J. M. Jones, as principal, October 27, 1851. More than one thousand young men and women have received instruction here," and some of these now hold positions of high honor.

"Rev. J. M. Jones, of Markle, Pa, was principal from 1851 to 1854, except one session and part of another, during which Mr. R. Boyd Jack, who died February, 1858, filled the position. Mr. Jones was assisted by Rev. Alex S. Marshall, of Marion, Iowa, session of 1852-3, and by Rev. J. M. Shields, session of 1853. Mrs. N. J. McElhose (Mrs. Judge Torrence) had charge of the ladies' department for about five years, beginning 1854, and was assisted by her sister, Miss L. K. Keir, (now Mrs. D. W. Townsend).

Rev. G. W. Mechlin, D. D., was principal from April, 1855 to December, 1861, assisted during the summer of 1856, by Rev. J. S. Boyd of Kirkville, Mo.

Rev. James H. Marshall, of Hooker, Pa., gave instructions from 1857 to 1860, having charge several sessions as assistant principal. Rev. D. J. Irwin, of Ebenezer, Pa., was associated with him the summer term of 1859-60. Miss Sarah H. Coe, (Mrs. D. J. Irwin), had charge of female department in 1860. Mrs. James H. Ritchey, A. M., assisted in 1857, and rev. B. S. Sloan, of Penn Run, Pa., for session 1861.

Rev. J. M. Jones, was elected principal in 1861, and served till 1868. He was assisted by W. R. Thompson, M. D., of Washington, Pa., the first year; by Rev. Robert Stewart, D. D., of Newbury, N. Y., summer of 1863; by Rev. John A. Calhoun, summer terms of 1864-5-6; by Rev. David Browne, of Oxford, Iowa, winter terms of 1864-5; by Rev. Johnston, McGaughey, of Stewardstown, Pa., summer of 1867. Mr. Jones resigned July, 1868.

In July, 1868, Rev. G. W. Mechlin, D. D., was elected principal. His assistants for summer terms, were in 1869, Rev. Colbert, L. M., Des Islets; in 1870-1-2, Rev. S. B. Fleming, of Arkansas City, Kansas; in 1873-4, Rev. A. B. Marshall, of Morris, Ill.; in 1875, Thomas F. McCune; in 1876, Rev. Henry T. McClelland, of Chase City, Va.; in 1877, Rev. John McCracken; in 1878, W. J. Alexander, A. B.; and in 1879, Rev. John S. Helm.

One of the boarding houses for the young, is the gift of G. W. Goheen, of Goheenville, Pa. – the other was built by contributions from various sources.

Ministers who had gone forth from Glade Run church and received instruction in its Academy, are James H. Marshall, D. J. Irwin, Johnston McGaughey, B. S. Sloan. Joseph T. Gibson, Thomas L. Wilson, Adam L. Wilson, S. B. Fleming, Calvert L. M. Des Isles, Albert B. Marshall, John P. Barbour, A. F. Irwin, Lycurgus Mechlin, Thomas M. Findley, T. W. Leard, John S. Helm, and James S. McComb. This list includes licentiates and students of theology, and there may be others since 1876, the list we write from.

The Academy has thirty students in 1879. The first board of trustees consisted of the ruling elders of the church whose names are found in this sketch.

The board of trustees appointed by court when charter for church was granted in 1857, were Jacob B. Guyer, J. B. Crouch, M. D. and John Marshall. The first elected by the church in 1858, were Joseph McGaughey, James R. Marshall, and Archibald Findley.