

## THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION OF SHELOCTA.

An attempt was made in 1854 to organize a congregation of the Associate Presbyterian Church in Shelocta, but as the persons elected to the office of ruling elders did not accept, the organization was not then effected. May 1, 1856, another attempt to effect an organization was made, and was successful. The following named persons, all, or nearly all, from what is now known as West Union congregation, were then enrolled as members of the Associate Presbyterian congregation of Shelocta: Robert Beatty, Mrs. Elizabeth Beatty, Miss Nancy Beatty, John Cunningham, Mrs. Rebecca Cunningham, Mrs. Mary Wiggins, Miss Jane Wiggins, Miss Sarah A. Wiggins, Andrew Wiggins, Mrs. Sarah Wiggins (wife of Andrew), Thomas Wiggins, Mrs. Sarah Wiggins (wife of Thomas W.) Samuel Wiggins, Mrs. Lena Ann Wiggins, Andrew Sharp, Mrs. Mary Sharp, Mrs. Sarah Sharp, Mrs. Margaret Smith, Hugh B. Miller, James Kerr, Mrs. Catharine Kerr, Mrs. Elizabeth Farren, Mrs. Margaret Walker, Miss Jane Walker, Charles Kerr, Mrs. Isabella Kerr, Miss Mary Kerr, Mrs. Hannah Lockhart, Robert H. Armstrong, Mrs. Martha Armstrong, Hugh Wiggins, Mrs. Jane Wiggins, Miss Susannah Keener, Miss Charlotte Keener, Miss Jane Keener, Alexander T. Calhoun, Mrs. Nancy Calhoun, John B. Beatty and Mrs. Margaret Beatty.

Of these thirty-nine named, thirteen are yet on the roll of this congregation. Alex. T. Calhoun, John B. Beatty and John Cunningham were elected ruling elders, and ordained and installed November 1, 1856.

A lot was purchased from Mr. Samuel Wiggins, on which the church building now occupied by the congregation was erected and opened for worship, in the summer of 1856. This house cost \$2,077.75. The building committee, consisting of R. H. Armstrong, James Kerr, John Cunningham and Hugh Wiggins, continued to manage the finances of the congregation until May 6, 1862, when the congregation, having been chartered, a board of trustees was elected. The first trustees were David Bothell, David Anthony, Nathan Douthett, John Cunningham, Samuel Campbell and Benjamin Johnston. Since that the following have been members of the board, viz: J. W. Calhoun, Moses Wood, Alex. A. Wiggins, W. L. Calhoun, James Wiggins, Johnston Keener, Samuel Calhoun, Andrew Sharp, A. J. Reed, John Russell, W. L. Reed, Samuel Lytle, John Ramsey, James Campbell, William Wiggins, A. P. Lytle, George Rupert, Hugh Wiggins, R. H. Cunningham and James A. Walker.

Rev. Byron Porter was installed as the first pastor of the congregation of the first Tuesday of July, 1856. Mr. Porter first preached but one-third of his time at Shelocta, the remainder of his time being spent at Elderton and Crete. At the end of the third year of his pastorate he resigned Crete, and divided his time equally between Shelocta and Elderton. After a very successful pastorate of over twenty years, he died at his residence in Elderton, Armstrong county, November 28, 1876. Mr. P. was born in Bridgewater, Pennsylvania, January 24, 1824. He graduated from Washington College, Washington, Pennsylvania, in 1844, and at the Theological Seminary of the Associate church to Cannonsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1849. He was ordained August 21, 1850, and was settled for five years in Randolph county, Illinois. On account of impaired health, he then came east, and settled as stated above.

December 11, 1877, Rev. J. Buff. Jackson was installed pastor of this congregation, in connection with Elderton, and still continues in charge.

John B. Beatty, of the original session, died August 16, 1857. John Robinson, Hugh Wiggins and Samuel Lytle were added to the session, April 17, 1858. Mr. Lytle was certified in 1859. John Ramsey and George S. Mitchell were added to the session August 17, 1859, and William Anderson, February 4, 1860. Mr. Robinson died August 29, 1865. Mr. Mitchell was certified in 1866. Samuel Lytle returned to the congregation in 1869 and resumed his place in the session.

January 29, 1871, all members of the session resigned, and the congregation adopted the rotatory system of electing elders. While the system was in force the following named persons were members of the session, viz: John Lytle, Andrew Sharp, A. J. Reed, Charles Barr, J. M. Rankin, James Wiggins, W. Anderson, Albert Dick and Dr. T. J. Marlin. May 7, 1877, it was decided to abandon the rotatory system of choosing elders. May 9, 1879, A. J. Reed, James Wiggins, Dr. T. J. Marlin and Albert Dick, who then composed the session, having resigned, and all having been re-elected, were, together with Andrew Sharp, installed, and these now form the session.

The present membership of the congregation is one hundred and fifty-eight, the largest it has ever been. Something over one hundred are enrolled in the Sabbath school.

By the union formed in 1858 between the Associate and Associate Reformed churches, the United Presbyterian church was formed, and this congregation is since known as the United Presbyterian congregation of Shelocta.