

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION
OF MECHANICSBURG AND THE CONGREGATION OF PINE GROVE
FROM WHICH IT HAS ITS ORIGIN.

As early as the year 1817 Rev. J. T. Bessly, then a resident of the State of South Carolina, but afterward for many years a resident of Allegheny City, Pa., traveled on horse-back from his native State through this part of the country and preached some to the fore-fathers from whom originated the congregations of the United Presbyterian Church in this part of the country. After this date, up to the year 1830, preaching and missionary labor were done in the same neighborhood by Revs. Messrs. Pringle, of the Associate Church; Jamison, Proudfit, McCrodded, Moses Herr, sr., and Moses Herr, jr., of the Associate Reformed Church. At this date the congregation of Pine Grove was organized by the election of Joseph McCortney and Matthew Dill as ruling elders. Rev. Mungo Dick, of Sewickly, Westmoreland county, Pa., presided in the organization of this congregation. The first and only house of worship occupied by this society was built in a stony hollow about three miles east of the present site of the village of Mechanicsburg; hence it was sometimes called "Stony Hollow" Church, and sometimes "Pine Grove" Church. At this time it is not known what the cost of this house of worship was. The first pastor of this congregation, in connection with Bethel congregation, was the Rev. N. C. Weed, who took charge of it in 1833, and was released in the year 1847. The next pastor was the Rev. S. M. Coon, who took charge of this congregation in connection with Bethel in the year 1852, when two congregations were organized, composed of members which had made up the old charge of Pine Grove. One of these congregations was called Mechanicsburg, and had its place of worship located in the village of Mechanicsburg. The other was called East Union, and had its place of worship at a point situated about six miles east from Mechanicsburg. The members of the session at the organization of Mechanicsburg congregation were Daniel McFarland and Joseph Wilson, and it had about forty members, but what their names were is not known at this time. The first members of the session of East Union congregation were Joseph McCortney and James Stewart, but what the names of the original church members were is not now known.

The congregation of Mechanicsburg, in connection with the Presbyterian congregation ("old school") of the same place, erected a house of worship in the year 1850 at a cost of about nine hundred and fifty dollars. About the year 1852 the congregation of East Union erected a house of worship at a point about six miles east of the village of Mechanicsburg, at a cost of about eight hundred dollars. Thus, these two new organizations being completed, the old Pine Grove Church was abandoned as a place of worship, and sold, and is now occupied as a dwelling house.

The Rev. S. M. Coon still remained as the pastor of Mechanicsburg and East Union congregations, in connection with Bethel congregation, until the year 1854, when he was released. The next pastor, the Rev. J. C. Greer, took charge of Mechanicsburg and East Union congregations, in connection with Centre congregation, in 1856, and remained as the pastor in this connection until the year 1859, when Mechanicsburg and Centre congregations applied for and obtained his services for the whole time. Rev. Greer remained as the pastor of these two congregations until the year 1864, when he was released and went into the Union army in the war of the rebellion as captain of a company.

The next pastor, the Rev. Samuel McArthur, took charge of Mechanicsburg congregation in connection with East Union and Greenville congregations in the year 1869. He remained as pastor in this congregation until the year 1874, when he was released and moved of New Concord, Ohio, where he still resides, but on account of the infirmities of age is not engaged in the active work of the ministry.

The next pastor, the Rev. D. H. Blair, took charge of Mechanicsburg congregation in connection with Bethel congregation in the year 1876, and was released in the year 1877, after having been the pastor of this charge for one year and three months.

Mechanicsburg congregation at the present time has a membership of about forty and a Sabbath School of about thirty scholars which meets on each Sabbath. East Union congregation, which is mentioned in connection with this narrative, is at the present time occupied as a mission station under the care of the session of Mechanicsburg, and the present pastor of Mechanicsburg and Bethel congregations preaches one sermon in East Union Church once a month. In connection with the congregation there is a Sabbath School of about forty scholars which meets each Sabbath, and with the blessing of God upon the means used in this needy mission field, it is hoped that East Union will grow into a useful and prosperous congregation. The following named persons are at present the officers of Mechanicsburg congregation, viz: Pastor, Rev. T. P. Patterson; Members of Sessions, Daniel McFarland, Joseph Wilson, Alexander Dick and Thompson McCrea.

Such is a brief sketch of the United Presbyterian congregation of Mechanicsburg and its connections. This congregation has at not time had a large membership, but at the present time we have the three congregations of Greenville, Mechanicsburg and East Union, which at their origin were composed of members which made up the old congregation of Pine Grove, and the three occupy the same territory which was occupied by the one original congregation; and while the membership of each of these congregations is not so large as the membership of the congregation from which they originated, yet with the blessing of God upon the fruitful labors it is hoped that three prosperous and useful congregations will be established on the same territory once occupied by the old Pine Grove congregation.