

Church Records

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“ The White Church “

The Schellsburg charge was originally a part of the Bedford charge, the first Congregation of the Schellsburg charge was organized in 1806. A lot of ground, situated on Chestnut Ridge, about 1/4 of a mile west of Shellsburg, was granted and conveyed by John Schell, after whom the town was named in 1806. Jointly to the Reformed and Lutheran congregations, on which to build a Union church. The deed for the ground was given on the 17th day of March 1807. This ground is now a part of Schellsburg cemetery.

Here was built what has been ever since commonly called, “The Church on the Hill” or “Old White Church”. It is a log building 25 by 30 feet, weather boarded, two stories high, galleries on three sides wineglass pulpit and a very large alter nearly in the center of the church. The logs for the building were donated by John Schell, John Mowery, Jacob Hillegrass and George Rock, each giving enough to build one side or end. The church was not finished at once, but by piecemeal. For thee years, the members worshiped here without a stove, the members living nearest carried with them to the service there “Dutch Ovens” filled with live coals. These together with their faith, kept them warm. In 1809 they purchased a stove and pipe, and in 1812 they improved the church by the addition of a pulpit, stairs and pews. And two years later the gallery was built, and several years after this the Church was plastered. There it stands in the middle of the cemetery like a lonely sentinel keeping watch over the dead that lie sleeping all around it.

The first regular minister of the charge was Rev. Deatrick Aurandt, but as to the exact date of his ministry we have no record. It must have been, however, between 1806 and 1811, as in 1811 Rev. Henry Gerhart became pastor. The old records of this church show an original membership of 37. From the time of it's organization we have no record of it's membership, except that given above, until 1836 at which date Rev. George Leidy records the Communicant members as 58-29 male and 29 female, ten years later in the time of Rev. Jacob Zeigler's ministry the membership is given as 86. And in 1851 in the time of Rev. Henry Heckerman's ministry the communicants were 102. After this date the number of communicant members seems to be smaller, owing perhaps to the formation of new congregations. During the early part of Rev. Heckerman's ministry the “Old White Church” was vacated and a new Reformed church built in the town of Schellsburg. On the 8th of February 1851 the consistory of the Reformed congregation met for the purpose of considering the propriety of building the new church, and at this meet the building committee entered into contract with parties for the erection of the church. Peter Schell broke the sod for the church on the first day of March 1851. The church was built of brick 42 by 62 feet. There was also a congregation organized and church built on Dry Ridge, which belonged, to the Schellsburg, or as then called, Bedford charge.

After this there was another congregation organized, at New Buena Vista, four miles south of Schellsburg and during the Pastorate of Rev. N.H. Skyles, two more congregations were organized, one at New Paris five miles north, and the other at Mann's Choice, five miles east of Schellsburg. The Schellsburg charge was constituted and separated from the Bedford charge during the Pastorate of Rev. Henry Heckerman and as thus constituted it consisted of Schellsburg, Dry Ridge and New Buena Vista congregation. To this newly constituted charge Rev. Joseph Hannaberg's was called on the 15th of July 1859. In 1862 the last year of Rev. Hannaberg's ministry, the charge numbered 306 members.

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During the last year of Rev. Skyles ministry 1872, the charge consisted of five congregations and numbered 380 members. In 1873 The Schellsburg charge was divided constituting Schellsburg, New Buena Vista and New Paris, the Schellsburg charge; and Mann's Choice, Dry Ridge and Savage, the Sulphur Springs charge. Rev. W.D. Lefevre was called to the former, and Rev. N.H. Skyles to the latter charge.

The Schellsburg charge consists at present of these three congregations and numbers 206 communicants. The pastor of the charge were as follows:

1-	Rev. Deatrick Aurandt	
2-	Rev. Henry Gearhart	1811 to 1829
3-	Rev. George Leidy	1835 " 1842
4-	Rev. Jacob Zeigler	1844 " 1849
5-	Rev. Henry Heckerman	1650 " 1859
6-	Rev. Joseph Hannaberg	1859 " 1862
7-	Rev. N.H. Skyles	1863 " 1873
8-	Rev. W.D. Lefevre	1873 " 1877
9-	Rev. H.S. Gamer	1878 " 1884
10-	Rev. F.W. Brown	1884 " 1888
11-	Rev. J. B. Stonesifer	1890 " 1891
12-	Rev. Daniel G. Hetrick	1892 " ----

This letter was handed to the now present caretaker of the Schellsburg cemetery. Mr. James B. Miller - R.D. #1

Copied by Helen Shaffer Hill April 18 1935.

[A00475 *Transcribed from JRM notes by James B. McVicker* 5/24/2005]