

JOURNAL

OF THE

Presbyterian Historical Society

VOL. X.

JUNE, 1919.

No. 2.

THE FIRST PROTESTANT CREEDS OF AMERICA

BY REV. PROF. JAMES I. GOOD, D.D.

PART II.

The creed of Rev. Peter Richer¹ was the first Protestant creed of America. We now follow it with the second Protestant creed prepared shortly after, in 1558.

The breach between Villegagnon, who had now become Catholic, and the French and Genevan Protestants widened, so that the latter were compelled to go back to France January 4, 1558, where they landed some time later. Soon after they left Rio Janeiro, the captain of the vessel on which they had sailed offered a small boat to any who desired to go back to Brazil. Five of them got back to Brazil in this boat and four of them found their way back to Villegagnon's fort in the harbor of Rio Janeiro. Villegagnon, suspecting them to be spies, ordered them to subscribe within twelve hours to a confession that he had drawn up, which doubtless was largely Roman Catholic in form. This they refused to do, and selected John Bortel, the oldest and best educated among them, to draw up a creed in reply. His creed is therefore the second Protestant creed of America. It was, however, not an individual creed, for it was signed by all four of these men who had come back to Villegagnon. But it is to be remembered, as one reads it, that it especially takes up the points to which Ville-

¹ See this Journal, March, 1919.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PRESBYTERIANISM IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA.

BY REV. WILLIAM WILSON MCKINNEY, A. M.

PART I.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, Western Pennsylvania was an unoccupied wilderness. This territory was claimed, for the most part, by both the French and English, with no distinct line of demarcation between the rival claims. The first trading posts and missionary stations which the French laid out in this wilderness attracted little attention at first, as they were widely separated. However, as the population of the English settlements in the eastern part increased and spread to territory further west, the French began to display greater vigor in opposing the extension of these settlements.

As the French had been the first to explore the Mississippi River, they laid claim to all the territory drained by the Mississippi and its tributaries. The English, on the other hand, while not knowing the extent or character of the territory, held that their charters gave them the control of all the land lying between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.¹

Partly to develop and substantiate this claim, King George II in 1749 formed the Ohio Company and granted them a vast extent of land, about six hundred thousand acres, along the southeastern bank of the Ohio River.² This region Christopher Gist in 1750 was sent to explore. Two years later, he induced eleven families to join with him in establishing a colony on a small stretch of land which is now known as Mt. Braddock. This settlement and that of Wendel Brown near Uniontown in 1754 were the only settlements in Western Pennsylvania prior to Braddock's defeat.³

¹ Wm. H. Egle, *History of Pennsylvania*.

² J. R. Syphen, *School History of Pennsylvania*, p. 103.

³ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 24.

The French now imprisoned the surveyors and traders which were sent out, claiming that they were intruders. The protest sent by Governor Dinwiddie through George Washington, and their subsequent refusal to leave the territory were the immediate cause of the first struggle for Western Pennsylvania and the incentive to the further settlement of this region. The attempt by the English to build a fort near the forks of the Ohio River, and the interference by the French resulted in the building in 1754 of Fort Duquesne at the junction of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers.⁴ Around this fort a few French pioneers located. All of these professed the Roman Catholic faith and no evidence of any Presbyterians can be found.

Among the provincial soldiers who formed part of General Forbes' army which destroyed Fort Duquesne in 1758 and built in its place⁵ Fort Pitt, we find large number of Presbyterians. Rev. Charles Beatty, the Presbyterian chaplain in Colonel Clapham's regiment, two days after the capture of Fort Duquesne, preached a thanksgiving sermon for the great victory which the English had won.⁶ This was the first Presbyterian service west of the Allegheny Mountains. Around this fort settled a small group of adventurous traders bent on making a living and caring very little for church matters or morality.⁷

In 1758, the land west of the Allegheny Mountains was opened for settlement. The Scotch-Irish who had settled the frontier regions at that time desired the land for themselves, and as they came into dispute with the Germans who also were settling this region, the proprietors of Pennsylvania requested them to move farther west. This they cheerfully did, and so we find the Scotch-Irish being the first to cross the Alleghenies.⁸

These Scotch-Irish settlers made ideal frontiersmen. Their

⁴ J. S. Bassett, *A Short History of the United States*, p. 122.

⁵ A. W. Patterson, *History of the Backwoods*, p. 113.

⁶ Erasmus Wilson, *Standard History of Pittsburgh*, p. 920.

⁷ D. K. Turner, *History of the Neshaminy Church*, p. 79.

⁸ S. G. Fisher, *Making of Pennsylvania*, p. 163.

independent nature seemed to need a large expanse of territory in which to grow and they developed great hardiness. Contrary to the custom of the Quakers, the Scotch-Irish settled their disputes with the Indians by recourse to the sword and not to treaty. Fighting became part of their religion. Situated thus on the frontier, their resolution, energy and industry enabled them to overcome all difficulties and formed characters most desirable and useful in the new country.⁹ Being rough, independent and vigorous, they sometimes developed these characteristics to excess and caused a great deal of trouble; but on the whole they formed a useful and much needed part of our colonists.

These early settlers were of a stern religious stock and carried their Bibles with them wherever they went. Thus the foundations of religious life were laid at the very beginning of their history. Before any minister labored in Western Pennsylvania and before any churches were established, many cabins were the scenes of devout family worship.¹⁰ When in 1758 the Western Pennsylvania frontier was opened, we find a large number of these chosen men moving westward. Coming from the Cumberland Valley and from the settled parts of Pennsylvania, they followed the road which General Forbes had laid out in marching to Pittsburgh. In the fertile Ligonier Valley they began to establish settlements and scattered widely even as far west as Fort Pitt. The close of the French and Indian War in 1760 gave the colonists a short period of peace, during which a number of new settlements were made and several forts built. It is worthy of note that although the Scotch-Irish were predominant through the newly settled region of Western Pennsylvania, they were not intolerant and lived in harmony with all as Christian brethren.

In 1760 around Fort Pitt the first town of Pittsburgh was laid out. In the following year, a census taken by Captain Clapham showed 239 settlers and 95 officers and soldiers and 104 houses.¹¹ The population was thus growing but as yet

⁹ George Chambers, *Tribute to the Irish and Scotch Settlers*, p. 148.

¹⁰ S. J. M. Eaton, *History of the Presbytery of Erie*, p. 6.

¹¹ William Darlington, *Pittsburgh in the Last Century*, p. 267.

we find no churches organized. The religious services were confined to the soldiers in the fort. The garrison chaplains at this time were Rev. H. Allison and Rev. W. McDowell.

The Indians noted with alarm this growth in population which was driving them from their hunting grounds and they felt that something must be done to curtail it.¹² Pontiac, the great chief of the Ottawas, realized that active measures must be taken while the settlers were still weak and that all of the tribes must join in the undertaking. In this Gyashuta ably assisted him. All were notified and eagerly did they join in the plan. It was decided to attack all the settlements at once, and so well was the plan executed, that only three of the frontier forts were able to withstand the onslaught of the Indians. Fort Pitt alone of the Western Pennsylvania forts was able to hold out. The relief led by Col. Boquet to Fort Pitt and the defeat of the Indians at Bushy Run in Westmoreland County checked this most formidable uprising. The subsequent defeat of the Indians by the same valiant fighter on their own territory completely broke the Indian spirit of aggression and opened the way for a lasting peace.¹³ At once settlements began to spring up. In 1765 Pittsburgh was laid out a second time by Col. J. Campbell, and a large number of settlers arrived. As before, the religious life was found only in the fort where Chaplain McLagan had spiritual charge.¹⁴

With this brief survey of the history of Western Pennsylvania during this period, let us now consider more particularly the beginnings of the religious activities in this region.

During 1766, one year after Pittsburgh had again been laid out, the Presbyterian Church began its missionary activities in the rapidly developing section of Western Pennsylvania. Rev. Charles Beatty, who had preached at the fall of Fort Duquesne, was sent with Rev. George Duffield to visit the frontier settlements and to note the general religious atmos-

¹² *History of Allegheny County*, p. 51.

¹³ Francis Parkman, *Conspiracy of Pontiac*, Chaps. XXII to XXVII.

¹⁴ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*; Easton, *Account of the Ecclesiastical History*, p. 209.

phere.¹⁵ For several days they conducted services among the settlers of Pittsburgh with great effect. After visiting other places they returned home and gave a full report to the Synod.¹⁶ One of the great results of their tour was the awakening of the Presbyterian Synod to the needs of the people on the frontier and a quickening of the missionary spirit of that body.

Accordingly, the Synod appointed Rev. John Brainerd and Rev. Robert Cooper to spend at least three months in visiting the frontier settlements.¹⁷ Owing to the poverty of the people of Western Pennsylvania at that time, the Synod ordered these missionaries to receive no money from the people, the Synod offering to pay the expense.¹⁸ The restlessness of the Indians during that year prevented this mission from being accomplished. In 1768 the Synod appointed Mr. Anderson as missionary to the west, instructing him to preach at least twelve Sabbaths. For each Sabbath he preached west of the Kittatinning Mountains he was to receive twenty shillings. How successful he was in this work is not known. During the same year Mr. Steele also spent some time among the settlers.¹⁹ Later Mr. Niles was appointed to spend his entire time in missionary labors in the western border of the state, but his ill health prevented him from doing this much-needed work.²⁰ Thus no missionaries visited this region until 1771 when Rev. James Finley spent two months in the district. During the same year the Synod gave fifteen pounds to the Donegal Presbytery to be used in missionary activities.²¹ The following year either Mr. Craighead or Mr. King supplied the preaching services. Which of the two it was, or how long he labored, the

¹⁵ A. T. McGill, *Centennial Historical Discourse*, p. 61; *Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia*, p. 362.

¹⁶ C. L. Thompson, *The Presbyterians*, p. 90.

¹⁷ J. H. Patton, *Popular History of Presbyterian Church*, p. 462.

¹⁸ *Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia* (for 1767), p. 369.

¹⁹ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 304.

²⁰ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 118.

²¹ R. M. Patterson, *American Presbyterianism*, p. 21.

report of the Donegal Presbytery does not state. During the next two years no preachers were sent to Western Pennsylvania, as the number of available men were few and the Synod considered the missionary work in the South as being more imperative.²² In 1774 J. Hanna, S. Smith, and William Foster were appointed to visit Western Pennsylvania and Virginia, but of the three only Mr. Smith was able to go.²³ During the same year Rev. J. Power made a short tour of the settlements.²⁴ In 1775 Mr. Foster was chosen to preach on six Sabbaths and Rev. John McMillan also made his first visit to the western frontier, returning the following year for another trip.²⁵ He notes in his journal that the congregations were "often numerous, very attentive and much affected."²⁶

During October and November of the following year, Mr. Carmicheel was sent by the Synod of Philadelphia to preach in this region. These efforts of the Synod were the only missionary activities carried on by the Presbyterian Church as a body. The arrival of several ministers in Western Pennsylvania about this time relieved the Synod of the necessity of furnishing preachers and also marked an era of great increase in the work.

Probably the first Presbyterian clergyman to settle permanently in Western Pennsylvania and devote his life to the work of saving the souls of the pioneers scattered over the western border of Pennsylvania was Dr. James Power. This eminent preacher was born at Nottingham, Chester County, in 1746. Receiving his early education at the academy conducted by Dr. Finley at that place, he entered Princeton College and graduated in 1766.²⁷ The New Castle Presbytery licensed him to preach June 24, 1772. In 1774 he crossed the Allegheny Mountains spending about three months in missionary work in what are now Westmoreland, Allegheny,

²² *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 322.

²³ *Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia*, p. 454.

²⁴ C. L. Thompson, *The Presbyterians*, p. 114.

²⁵ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 185.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

²⁷ *Tribute to the Irish and Scotch Settlers*, p. 136.

Washington and Fayette Counties.²⁸ Returning, he spent about two years preaching in the East as a stated supply. However, his missionary journey left a great impress on his mind and he decided to spend his entire life in the West.²⁹ With his wife and four little daughters and a few household goods, he again crossed the mountains in the early part of November, 1776.³⁰ He made his home at Dunlap's Creek, near Brownsville and used that as a center for missionary work among the destitute settlers of the whole region, visiting Laurel Hill, Tyrone, and Unity. He also visited Washington County, where he baptized the first child and preached the first sermon in that district.³¹ This child was the son of a Mr. Marquis. He continued this work until 1779 when he became pastor of the congregations at Sewickly³² and Mt. Pleasant, these stations being fully ten miles apart. On April 22, 1767, he resigned the Sewickly charge in order to devote his whole time to the work at Mt. Pleasant. He continued as pastor until April 15, 1817, when ill health compelled his resignation.³³ His salary at Mt. Pleasant was \$600.00 yearly. But he continued to work among the people until his death in 1830. As a token of his ability, the degree of D.D. had been conferred upon him by Jefferson College.

Dr. Power was a man of medium height, slender and erect. His manners were easy and graceful and he was extremely neat in his dress.³⁴ Being possessed of a remarkably clear and distinct voice, he could be heard at a great distance, although his voice was not loud. His sermons were expressed in well chosen words. Being endowed with a wonderful memory of persons and names, he could call every person in his district by name. In improving the morals of the community and in causing the young to turn their minds to religion, he was very

²⁸ J. H. Patton, *Popular History of Presbyterian Church*, p. 210.

²⁹ W. B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, p. 326.

³⁰ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 229.

³¹ David Elliott, *Life of McCurdy*, p. 287.

³² Near present city of West Newton.

³³ W. B. Sprague, *Annals*, Vol. III, p. 327.

³⁴ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 210.

successful and every year saw large increases in his congregations.

The second of the noble pioneer preachers was Dr. John McMillan. He was born of Irish parents in 1752 at Faggs Manor and later was sent to a grammar school at Pequea, in Lancaster County, where he received his first religious impressions and decided to give himself up to the work of the ministry.³⁵ After graduating from Princeton College, he studied theology under Dr. Smith at Pequea, and was licensed to preach October 26, 1774, by the Presbytery of New Castle.³⁶ In the following year he spent some time in missionary work and made a long tour of the frontiers of Pennsylvania and Virginia. On this tour he preached to the people on many occasions, preaching at Fort Pitt the second Sunday in September. The winter of the same year he spent in making another trip, remaining several months in the vicinity of Chartiers and Pigeon Creek. He accepted a call from these two places, spending most of his time among these people.³⁷ These were the first Presbyterian Congregations organized west of the Monongahela. Owing to the uprising of the Indians, he did not move his family west until November, 1778. He continued as pastor of both these churches until 1800, when he resigned to devote all his time at Chartiers, about ten miles from the place where Monongahela City now stands.³⁸

Dr. McMillan continued in the active work of the ministry until 1830 and died three years later at Canonsburg, Pa., at the ripe old age of eighty-three. He was six feet in height, brusque in manner and of coarse features and clumsy form.³⁹ His manner and mode of expression were very blunt and this at times caused him to drive away those whom he desired to reach. This bluntness also occasionally got him into trouble as when a certain Rev. Mr. Birch caused him to be tried in court for slander. He was finally acquitted of the charge by

³⁵ *Letter of Dr. McMillan to Dr. Carnahan, March 26, 1832.*

³⁶ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention, p. 211.*

³⁷ C. L. Thompson, *The Presbyterians*, p. 115.

³⁸ *Tribute to the Irish and Scotch Settlers, p. 137.*

³⁹ W. B. Sprague, *Annals*, Vol. III, p. 354.

the Supreme Court.⁴⁰ He had a very strong voice which he used with such force that it often offended delicate ears. In this powerful voice he took great pride, and shortly before his death he remarked that he wished "he could leave his lungs as a legacy to the church, for they would serve some poor, weak-voiced fellow of another generation."⁴¹ Not having any great talent in extemporaneous speaking, he wrote out his sermons and memorized them. These sermons were powerful in thought, expressed in plain English which every one could understand, and were of sufficient length to consume an hour in their delivery. His powerful voice enabled him without fatigue to preach in the open air to large assemblages.

In 1781 he began a revival which lasted for two years, a number joining his congregation at every service, while at one time forty-five professed conversion. At a subsequent revival as many as sixty were added, and at still another revival fifty were converted.⁴² Quite frequently in these revivals the meetings lasted all night.⁴³ In his pastoral work he labored diligently to lead the young to Christ. He was also very much interested in the preparation of young men for the ministry. While his efforts toward education were not the earliest in the West, they were more diligent and longer continued. He was largely instrumental in establishing a school at Canonsburg for the training of ministers, which later was merged with the Academy at that place. To this Academy, Dr. McMillan gave freely, setting aside ten pounds a year for its support.⁴⁴ He was always willing to tutor ambitious young men privately and aid them in obtaining money to complete their course. The eminent preachers who received more or less of their early training from Dr. McMillan form a noble list of about one hundred. In his teaching he gave lectures which

⁴⁰ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 196.

⁴¹ *Presbyterian Banner*, August 7, 1867.

⁴² W. B. Sprague, *Annals*, Vol. III, p. 352.

⁴³ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 187.

⁴⁴ F. J. Collier, *Chartiers Church and Its Ministers*, p. 17.

the students were required to take down in writing and memorize.⁴⁵

Dr. McMillan was the last of the four original preachers to die. By his long and useful life he left probably the greatest influence for good of all the four. With all his imperfections he was well fitted for the field of labor which he was called upon to fill.

Another of the four original Presbyterian ministers to devote his life to the people of Western Pennsylvania was Rev. Thaddeus Dodd. Born near Newark, N. J., March 7, 1740, he showed a taste for mathematics in early life, but owing to the poverty of his father he was able to attend school only at brief intervals. Later, by hard study at home and by periods of teaching, he was able to enter the sophomore class at Princeton College, graduating in 1773.⁴⁶ During his youth he was given to prayer and prayed earnestly for the salvation of his soul which he felt to be in great danger. His religious nature was further developed by the fear of approaching death, due to his poor health, and he tried to be always prepared for death.⁴⁷

The New York Presbytery licensed him to preach in 1775. Although he had been confined to his bed for over a year, he made a missionary tour through the West in 1777, visiting especially Dunlaps Creek and the Ten Mile Creek. Ten Mile Creek is located in the southwestern part of Washington County and enters the Monongahela River ten miles above Redstone Creek. The Ten Mile settlement was established in 1773 by a few settlers who later built a fort for protection.⁴⁸ To this settlement comprising about ten families Mr. Dodd set out in 1777 having received a call from the people of that place. These settlers, though few in number, agreed to support him, each man furnishing something. A certain Mr. Lindly furnished the flour, Mr. Cook the meat, etc.⁴⁹ Owing to the danger

⁴⁵ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 209.

⁴⁶ W. B. Sprague, *Annals*, Vol. III, p. 356.

⁴⁷ Autobiography printed in *Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. IV, 1854.

⁴⁸ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 139.

⁴⁹ Memoir of Dr. T. Dodd written by C. Dodd, his son, printed in the *Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. IV, 1854.

from the Indians, Mr. Dodd left his family at Patterson's Creek, Virginia, until September, 1779, when with his wife and child and two brothers he permanently settled on the farm which he had been cultivating. Here he formed two congregations, known as the Upper and Lower Ten Mile, with but one set of elders. Owing to the protection of the fort, no one of this settlement was killed by the Indians and it slowly continued to grow.

While the people were shut up in the fort awaiting an Indian attack, Mr. Dodd conducted a revival at which time forty new members were admitted to the church. He conducted a number of other successful revivals both at home and in assisting others of the four original preachers. Especially at Cross Creek in 1781 was his ability shown while assisting Rev. Mr. Smith. In May, 1783, he conducted his first communion in a barn, a service delayed for eleven long years on account of fear of Indian attacks.⁵⁰ and two years later a church was erected.

Mr. Dodd being of a highly refined and educated nature, early took an interest in educating the young. With the hearty approval and aid of his people, he started to build a log academy near his own home. In the following year, 1782, he opened his school, which was the first classical and mathematical school in the West.⁵¹ This school continued for three and a half years, the reasons for its discontinuance not being known. With the co-operation of Dr. McMillan and Rev. Joseph Smith, an academy was opened at Washington, April 1, 1789, with an endowment of five thousand acres of land.⁵² Of this academy Mr. Dodd became the first principal having between twenty and thirty students. During this time he still continued as pastor at Ten Mile, spending about two-thirds of his time at Washington. The destruction of the building by fire the following year stopped the academy and Mr. Dodd returned to give his full time to the work of the ministry.⁵³

⁵⁰ E. C. Wines, *Historical Discourse*, p. 14.

⁵¹ Joseph Smith, *History of Jefferson College*, p. 9.

⁵² W. B. Sprague, *Annals*, Vol. III, p. 358.

⁵³ *Tribute to the Irish and Scotch Settlers*, p. 139.

Mr. Dodd was erect and slender, sallow in complexion, but with keen and lively eyes.⁵⁴ His preaching was earnest and persuasive and attractive, especially to young people. He used a few notes but seldom wrote out his sermons in full. Although his voice was not very strong he could be heard by large audiences, as his enunciation was very distinct. Of the early ministers he was the most learned, being proficient in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, mathematics, and the natural sciences.⁵⁵ He was afflicted with pulmonary consumption which gradually grew worse, and he died on the twentieth day of May, 1793. He was the second of the four early preachers to die, Mr. Smith having passed away thirteen months previously.

Rev. Joseph Smith was the fourth of the original Presbyterian preachers to settle west of the Alleghanies. Born at Nottingham in 1736, of pious parents, he graduated at Princeton College and was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New Castle, August 5, 1767.⁵⁶ After preaching in the eastern part of the state, he made a trip to Western Pennsylvania and was impressed with the great dearth of preachers in this region. His heart was deeply moved, and he accepted a call from the congregations at Buffalo and Cross Creek in Washington County, June 21, 1779. The salary was \$600.00, half to be paid by each congregation. December of the following year, he moved his family near the Buffalo Meeting House and entered upon his ministry. Here he remained until the time of his death, twelve years later.⁵⁷

Mr. Smith was tall and slender and not of very robust health. His complexion was fair and he was possessed of a fine countenance and eyes of piercing brilliancy when he became animated. His voice was remarkable both for its power and pathos. In his preaching he dwelt on the terrors of the law and the horrors of hell, so that he was often spoken of as "Hell

⁵⁴ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 211.

⁵⁵ James Allison, *Address at the Centennial Anniversary of Ten Mile Church*, p. 21.

⁵⁶ W. B. Sprague, *Annals*, Vol. III, p. 274.

⁵⁷ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 62.

Fire Smith."⁵⁸ He was a great revival preacher and he won a large number of converts at his special efforts. His sermons were often protracted until long after dark. Mr. Smith was a great man of prayer and often retired to the woods for long seasons of prayer. Oftentimes he would rise from his bed at night and pray for his people, especially the youth of his congregation. For protection during these nightly vigils, he had at the foot of his bed a cloak which he threw about him.⁵⁹

Mr. Smith is believed to have conducted the first school for the training of young men for the ministry. In 1785 in the kitchen of his home at Upper Buffalo he opened a Latin school called the Study, with four pupils. For a time, the other three pioneer ministers helped him. Later, he moved his school to Chartiers, near Canonsburg. In 1791 it was united with the Canonsburg Academy which had been shortly before erected and this later developed into Jefferson College. With such labors at home and abroad he wore himself out and died April 19, 1792, of inflammation of the brain, being the first of the four early ministers to die.⁶⁰

The zealous labors of these four pioneer preachers in the rapidly growing settlements caused such demands upon their time, that they were unable to attend regularly the meetings of the Donegal Presbytery, with which they were still affiliated. Feeling the need of a strong bond of union between the congregations and realizing the good results of organized effort, they united in presenting a request to be erected into a separate Presbytery. The organization and progress of this new Presbytery will now be traced.

The first Presbytery to be formed west of the Allegheny Mountains was the Presbytery of Redstone, erected in 1781. The complete minutes regarding its organization by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia are as follows: "At a meeting of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia held at Philadelphia the sixteenth of May, 1781, the Rev. Messrs. Joseph Smith, John McMillan, James Power and Thaddeus Dodd having requested to be erected into a separate Presbytery to be

⁵⁸ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 221.

⁵⁹ *Joseph Smith, Old Redstone*, p. 69.

⁶⁰ *Tribute to the Irish and Scotch Settlers*, p. 141.

known by the name of the Presbytery of Redstone; the Synod grants their request and appoints their first meeting to be held at Laurel Hill Church, the third Wednesday of September next at eleven o'clock A. M."⁶¹ No geographical limits were assigned and no churches were mentioned. Being the first Presbytery west of the Allegheny Mountains, the limits were the western border of civilization, which was rapidly moving farther and farther from the coast. In this vast region the population, while widely scattered, was not large. The largest settlement was in the region along the Ohio, Monongahela, and Allegheny Rivers and especially at the forks of the Ohio.

The first meeting of this Presbytery was held September 19, 1781, at Pigeon Creek in Washington County. The Indian attacks made a meeting at Laurel Hill impossible. All the four pioneer preachers were present except Joseph Smith. Dr. McMillan was chosen as the first moderator and Dr. Power the first clerk.⁶² At this meeting Muddy Creek and the South Fork of the Ten Mile Creek congregations asked for supplies, but such provision could not be made at that time. At the next meeting one year later, Rev. James Dunlap was admitted to the Presbytery bringing the number up to five.⁶³

Mr. Dunlap was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, 1744. He was graduated at Princeton in 1773 and eight years later was ordained by the Presbytery of New Castle.⁶⁴ He soon moved to the West and accepted a call from the congregation at Dunlap's Creek and Laurel Hill. He continued as pastor of these churches until 1789, when he resigned the former charge to devote all his time to the Laurel Hill congregation.⁶⁵ In 1803 he was chosen President of Jefferson College at Canonsburg, and he acted in that capacity for eight years. While discharging the duties of this position, he was also pastor at Millers Run Church.⁶⁶ He died in November of

⁶¹ J. H. Patton, *Popular History of Presbyterian Church*, p. 491.

⁶² *Minutes of the Redstone Presbytery*, p. 3.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁴ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 212.

⁶⁵ *Tribute to the Irish and Scotch Settlers*, p. 150.

⁶⁶ *Religious Remembrancer*, December 5, 1818.

1818 at the age of seventy-five. Upon these five faithful preachers of the Word fell the great task of visiting and supplying ministers for the scattered congregations of this vast area. Their faithful stewardship was abundantly rewarded and rapidly the work spread among the hardy pioneers.

The next minister to join the Redstone Presbytery was Rev. John Clark. He was well advanced in years, joining the Presbytery at the age of sixty-four, at its regular meeting in March, 1783.⁶⁷ He excited considerable comment by being the only member of the Presbytery to wear a wig. Born in 1718, he, like all the other original members of the Presbytery, was a Princeton graduate. After preaching in the Philadelphia and New Castle Presbytery for a number of years, in 1781 he came to supply the congregation of Bethel and Lebanon.⁶⁸ He later became pastor of these churches and continued to serve in that capacity until his death in 1797.

Rev. James Findley followed Mr. Clark to the Redstone Presbytery, taking charge of the congregations at the forks of the Youghogany River known as Rehoboth and Round Hill. In 1783 he moved his family west and two years later devoted his life to the work at the above-mentioned places.⁶⁹ Mr. Findley had made his first trip west in 1771 to explore the country and look for a suitable location for a permanent settlement. He was the first minister, with the exception of the army chaplains, to go west of the Alleghenies. Circumstances, however, compelled him to postpone his settlement until a much later date. He was sixty years old when he assumed the laborious task of pastor and missionary over a large territory. For ten years he performed a vast amount of pastoral labor, his field being about fifteen miles long and eight or ten miles wide. This was a difficult task even for a young man, but he continued as pastor of these churches until his death in 1795.⁷⁰

These seven men for a number of years formed the back-

⁶⁷ Joseph Smith, *Op. cit.*, p. 297.

⁶⁸ E. H. Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, Vol. I, p. 266.

⁶⁹ Joseph Smith, *Op. cit.*, p. 283.

⁷⁰ *Tribute to the Scotch and Irish Settlers*, p. 150.

bone of all religious movements in Western Pennsylvania. This field, large as it was at first, grew larger and larger as new churches were organized. The calls for supplies became more and more numerous, nearly fifty places calling for ministers within the first seven years of the organization of the Presbytery. However, during these seven years no more preachers permanently came to their aid. Rev. Wait Cornell, a man of great ability, entered the work, but remained only a short time, assisting Mr. Smith in his revival work at Cross Creek in the spring of 1787, and spent a few months supplying vacancies and doing other missionary work, and then returned home.⁷¹ Others came to help but their work was transitory and of little value, some being even a detriment.

Rev. Samuel Barr in 1785 accepted a call from the united congregations of Pittsburgh and Pitt Township, but he remained only a few years and was dismissed in September, 1790, having been of little value in assisting the founders. He was not as strict as the other preachers in his denunciation of some of the lax morals of his congregation, and could not work well with his brethren.⁷²

In 1786 Mr. Morrison and his son preached in some of the vacant churches, but they caused a great deal of trouble and their early departure was a cause of thankfulness. Another source of trouble was a Mr. Thomas Cooley, who came asking the Presbytery for permission to preach. After allowing him to fill some vacancies, the Redstone Presbytery examined his credentials, and thinking them forged, refused to permit him to continue preaching. The General Assembly later ratified their action, but it required considerable trouble to convince the people as to his character.⁷³

Another cause of vexation was Mr. S. Mahon, who wished to be installed as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. The Presbytery "proceeded to converse with him upon his acquaintance with experimental religion and proposed to him several cases of conscience but did not receive such

⁷¹ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 131.

⁷² *Centennial Volume of the First Church*, p. 27.

⁷³ Joseph Smith, *Op cit.*, p. 130.

satisfaction as would induce them to proceed to his ordination." ⁷⁴ The first Church had among its members a number of immoral men and was the subject of much discussion at that time. They were not very amenable to discipline and became a chronic source of irritation. This culminated in the request of the session to the General Assembly in 1794 to be separated from the Presbytery of Redstone and to be annexed to the Presbytery of Carlisle. This request was quite properly refused. At this time a fast day was appointed in January, 1796, when the members of the Presbytery prayed "that the prevailing infidelity, vice, immorality and spiritual sloth be removed." ⁷⁵

In 1788 the Presbytery licensed four men to travel in the field, preaching at various points. John Brice was stationed at Three Ridges and the Forks of Wheeling, James Hughes at Short Creek and Lower Buffalo, and Joseph Patterson at Raccoon, where he remained for twenty-seven years. In addition, Mr. James McGready was licensed, and after laboring in the Presbytery he moved into Kentucky, where he was very successful in revival work. ⁷⁶ All of these four men were educated and trained by one or more of the four founders of the Presbytery. The Presbytery was thus growing by its own strength. During the next few years, six other men were licensed to preach, which strengthened the Presbytery very considerably. These also had been trained and educated at home, a testimonial to the faithful work of these earnest preachers. Mr. Samuel Porter was stationed at Poke Run and Congruity, where he remained until his death. Mr. George Hill was at first given the congregations at Donegal, Fairfield, and Wheatfield. After six years of successful work, he accepted a call from Ligonier at which place he remained until his death. Thomas Marquis was installed as pastor of the congregations of Upper Buffalo and Cross Creek, retaining charge of the latter until a year before his death in 1827. ⁷⁷ Mr. John Mc-

⁷⁴ *Minutes of the Redstone Presbytery*, p. 103.

⁷⁵ *Centennial Volume of the First Church*, p. 29.

⁷⁶ J. H. Patton, *Popular History of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 224.

⁷⁷ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 214.

Pherrin accepted a call from the Unity and Salem Churches.⁷⁸ Mr. William Swan soon after being licensed to preach in December, 1791, was beset with numerous requests for his services, but finally accepted the call from Long Run and Sewickley, laboring in these places for twenty-five years.⁷⁹ Mr. Robert Marshall, after being licensed, spent two and a half years preaching among the vacant churches in the Presbytery and then joined the Presbytery of Transylvania.⁸⁰ All of these six men received their education in the Redstone Presbytery.

Another addition to the Presbytery was the Rev. Jacob Jennings. He was a member of the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church when he came to Western Pennsylvania in 1791. After preaching in the vacant Presbyterian Churches, he became a member of the Redstone Presbytery in 1792. He was installed pastor of the congregation at Dunlap's Creek, in Fayette County, near Brownsville, in which capacity he continued to serve until he resigned in 1811 on account of ill health.⁸¹ In November, 1792, the Rev. Joseph Smith, one of the four charter members of the Presbytery, had the cheer and comfort of receiving his own son, David, into the ministry. He accepted a call from the united churches of George's Creek and Tent, both of which are in Fayette County.⁸² After four years he moved to Westmoreland County to assume charge of the congregations of Rehoboth and Roundhill, which were made vacant by the death of Rev. James Finley.

Rev. Boyd Mercer was the last minister trained in the Redstone Presbytery to be licensed by that body before it was divided. He was assigned to look after the vacant churches, but he did not accept a regular charge, as he was early dismissed to the Presbytery of Ohio. The other member of the Redstone Presbytery was the Rev. Thomas Moore, who joined

⁷⁸ *Proceedings of Centennial Celebration of Presbytery of Greensburg*, p. 10.

⁷⁹ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 421.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 439.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 429.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 445.

shortly before the division. Receiving his training in New England, he came to the West in his prime and did effectual work at Salem and later at Upper Ten Mile.⁸³

The last meeting of the Old Redstone Presbytery was held at Long Run, near McKeesport, Friday, October 18, 1793.⁸⁴ For twelve years it had been essaying the enormous task of taking care of the Presbyterian Churches and congregations west of the Alleghenies. To cover this large territory with so few available preachers required an enormous amount of missionary labor. They all had at least two charges, which were often very far apart, and in no case less than eight miles. Besides these, a great deal of time and effort was spent in supplying vacant churches. To add to their burdens, they and their congregations were subject during this period to raids by the Indians, destroying homes and crops and often killing or leading into captivity their loved ones. However, Wayne's decisive victory in 1794 removed this hindrance to their work.⁸⁵ To supply a vacant church often meant much hardship and exposure. A journey of from fifteen to fifty miles frequently had to be made, necessitating an extended absence from their families. However, despite the lack of good roads and the danger of Indian attacks, not one of these early preachers ever met with disaster. Many were their narrow escapes. This was well illustrated in the life of Rev. Mr. Marquis. One night, as was his custom, he withdrew to the woods to pray. As he was upon his knees, an Indian raised his hand to hurl a tomahawk, but before it was thrown he was shot by Mr. Marquis' companion who unexpectedly came upon the scene.⁸⁶ Rev. Mr. Porter was accustomed to examine his rifle before he preached to the people of Congruity. Nor did these preachers rely on human aid alone. Rev. Abraham Boyd one day started to church without his rifle, and was horrified to see an armed Indian standing behind a tree. No help was near, so Mr. Boyd

⁸³ E. C. Wines, *Historical Discourse*, p. 16.

⁸⁴ *Minutes of the Redstone Presbytery*, p. 103.

⁸⁵ J. S. Bassett, *Short History of the United States*, p. 263.

⁸⁶ Article by Rev. Richard Lea on "Our Early Ministers in Western Pennsylvania," in *Presbyterian Banner*, July 31, 1867.

pretended not to see the Indian and kneeled down and prayed. Finally he arose and to his relief the Indian had departed and was never seen again.⁸⁷

The conflicting claims of Pennsylvania and Virginia also caused considerable worry and trouble to these early ministers.

The founders of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania were men especially fitted for the exigencies of the times. They performed their work faithfully and laid broad foundations for the future growth of the church. They were powerful in prayer, humble, and devoted. None desired to display his learning or to shine as a preacher. To save souls was their one aim. It is remarkable how much they knew considering the small number of books available and the little time they could devote to study. Owing to the scarcity of paper, these preachers learned to write in a very small hand so that the outline of a long sermon was often written on a piece of paper small enough to be placed in a pocket Bible.⁸⁸ Several of these pioneer ministers were also endowed with great gifts and would have done honor to the most exalted stations. As helpers, they chose men of strong piety and great ability, who seemed to imbibe their own spirit. "Rarely, if ever, in the history of the Presbyterian Church in this country has any of its missionary fields been occupied by a more able and devoted band of pioneer laborers than that which was covered by the old Redstone Presbytery."⁸⁹

As previously stated, the Presbytery of Redstone continued as the sole Presbytery west of the Alleghenies until 1793. The Synod of Virginia, which after the division of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia into four synods⁹⁰ in 1788 had control of the Redstone Presbytery, agreed to the formation of the Ohio Presbytery. It was formed with five members,

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Many of the sermons of Dr. McMillan are still preserved in manuscript form at The Presbyterian Historical Society. A magnifying glass must be used in order to read with comfort.

⁸⁹ E. H. Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church*, Vol. I, p. 267.

⁹⁰ W. H. Roberts, *Sketch of the History of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 17.

namely, Dr. McMillan, John Clark, Joseph Patterson, James Hughes, and John Brice, all former members of the Redstone Presbytery. The Ohio Presbytery embraced that part of the United States lying north of Virginia and Kentucky. Its eastern boundary was the Monongahela River and a line extending northward from the junction of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers to Presque Island. Pittsburgh was thus left in the Redstone Presbytery. During the remainder of the eighteenth century the Presbyteries of Redstone and Ohio continued as the only Presbyteries west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The territory covered by the Ohio Presbytery was for the most part in Pennsylvania. As there was no western boundary, its territory could include everything west of the Monongahela, but there were very few settlers in Ohio during this period. It was a strictly rural presbytery and located on the frontier. All the churches that were organized were located in the country. Washington and Wheeling were the only towns of importance in the Presbytery, but neither of them had churches.⁹¹ This territory, although sparsely inhabited at the time it was formed into a presbytery, rapidly became inhabited, and the growth of the Presbyterian churches in a few years was almost unprecedented.⁹² The duties of the pioneer preachers in this Presbytery included a large amount of missionary work, as there were but five ministers to care for the twenty churches. The early churches in the Ohio Presbytery were Pigeon Creek, Chartiers, Ten Mile, Upper Buffalo, Cross Creek, Lower Buffalo, Three Ridges, Forks of Wheeling, Mingo Creek,⁹³ Horseshoe, Pike Run, Muddy Creek, Mill Creek, Kings Creek and Three Springs.⁹⁴

The first meeting of this new Presbytery was held at Upper Buffalo, October 22, 1793. Dr. McMillan was chosen moderator and Rev. John Brice clerk. At this opening assembly four

⁹¹ *History of the Washington Presbytery*, p. 8.

⁹² E. H. Gillett, *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 324.

⁹³ The grandfather of the writer of this sketch was afterwards pastor of this church.

⁹⁴ *History of the Presbytery of Washington*, p. 10.

churches asked for supplies, and at each subsequent meeting the number of requests became larger and larger. The sending of supplies to these places was one of the great tasks devolving upon these faithful few. Long journeys were of course necessary, but the gratitude of the people and the number of churches formed amply repaid for the sacrifices involved.

In 1794, the Presbytery was strengthened by the addition of three new members, men who had been licensed to preach by the Redstone Presbytery but who had not yet been ordained. After their ordination by the Ohio Presbytery, Thomas Marquis was installed as pastor of the church at Black Lick and Cross Creek; Thomas Moore accepted a call from the Ten Mile congregation, succeeding Dr. Dodd, who had recently died; and Boyd Mercer ministered to the needs of the people at Pigeon Creek and Pike Run in Washington County. With these three additions, the vacant churches received more supplies, and in consequence more churches developed and the field increased. Dr. Samuel Ralston, after preaching in the New Castle and Redstone Presbyteries, was received as a member of the Ohio Presbytery in 1796 and became pastor of Mingo and Horse Shoe Bottom, now Monongahela City.⁹⁵ The following year, William Woods was ordained as pastor of the churches of Bethel and Lebanon in Allegheny County. The same year Rev. J. Kennedy came from the New Castle Presbytery and entered upon the work in the Ohio Presbytery, not however accepting a regular charge.

As in the case of the early Redstone Presbytery, the Ohio Presbytery diligently sought young men of piety and ability to enter the ministry. During the eight and a half years before the Presbytery was again subdivided, eighteen young men were licensed to preach the Gospel.⁹⁶ Of these the larger number received their theological training at Dr. McMillan's school at Canonsburg. This little academy had no resources of its own and for a time was supported entirely by the clergy and their congregations.⁹⁷ However, the rapid increase in the work

⁹⁵ W. B. Sprague, *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 146.

⁹⁶ *History of the Presbytery of Washington*, p. 12.

⁹⁷ E. H. Gillett, *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 332.

caused a great need for preachers, which the churches were unable to meet.

Another pioneer preacher was Rev. George M. Scott, from the Presbytery of New Brunswick. He had made a long missionary journey throughout Western New York and Pennsylvania. Becoming interested in the frontier work he accepted calls from the churches at Mill Creek in Beaver County and Flats, or Fairview, Virginia, in 1799.⁹⁸ In the year following, Andrew Gwin, another of those licensed by the Redstone Presbytery, was ordained and installed by the Ohio Presbytery as pastor at Pigeon Creek and Pike Run. He served these churches acceptably for a number of years, but later lost his standing as a minister because of his improper private conduct.⁹⁹

Shortly before the Presbytery was again divided, two other ministers were received. Dr. John Anderson from the Presbytery of Orange became pastor of the church at Upper Buffalo and was one of the most distinguished members of the Ohio Presbytery, serving as President of the Board of Trustees of Washington College. William Wylie, licensed by the Presbytery of West Lexington, became pastor of the churches at Fairfield and Upper and Lower Sandy. The day after he was installed by the Ohio Presbytery, he was transferred to the Erie Presbytery, where he did very effectual work.¹⁰⁰

Of the ministers educated and licensed by the Ohio Presbytery, Samuel Bonnell was the first. He, however, soon left the Presbytery to carry on missionary work in Tennessee. In 1798 three others were licensed; John Watson, Joseph Anderson and Thomas Hughes. John Watson became pastor at Miller's Run. He was a man of remarkable ability but died at an early age.¹⁰¹ Joseph Anderson labored in the western territory, and Thomas Hughes became pastor at New Salem and Mount Pleasant in Beaver County.¹⁰² The same year

⁹⁸ *History of the Presbytery of Washington*, p. 122.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 411.

¹⁰⁰ S. J. M. Eaton, *History of the Presbytery of Erie*, p. 204.

¹⁰¹ W. B. Sprague, *Op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 208.

¹⁰² *History of the Presbytery of Washington*, p. 409.

Smilie Hughes, his brother, was licensed to preach, but died soon after. Later, James Snodgrass did missionary work in the West. Elisha Macurdy, one of the most famous members of the Ohio Presbytery, became pastor of the churches at Cross Roads and Three Springs¹⁰³ in 1800. Other recruits were Joseph Stockton, of Meadville; John McClain, of Montours, Allegheny County, and William Wick, pastor of the Hopewell and Neshannock Churches in Lawrence County.¹⁰⁴ Of these, John McClain was the only failure, as he was deposed from the pastorate on account of intemperance.

Abraham Boyd, who withdrew to the Redstone Presbytery;¹⁰⁵ Samuel Tait, the pastor at Upper Salem and Cool Spring;¹⁰⁶ James Satterfield, ordained as pastor at Moorefield and Upper Neshannock;¹⁰⁷ and Robert Lee, who accepted a call from Amity and Big Spring Churches in Mercer County,¹⁰⁸ were licensed by the Ohio Presbytery in 1800. The other young men who were licensed to preach by the Ohio Presbytery before it was subdivided were Robert Patterson, who later became pastor at Greenfield,¹⁰⁹ Cephas Dodd, who succeeded his father at Upper and Lower Ten Mile,¹¹⁰ Stephen Lindsley, who went to Marietta, Ohio, and William Woods, Jr., who was installed by the Erie Presbytery at Plain Grove and Center Churches in Mercer County. These were the pastors and licentiates who for a period of eight and a half years ministered to the people in the vast area comprising the Ohio Presbytery. They were indeed a noble band and strove with all their might to meet the needs of the churches.

Having thus briefly outlined the work and the workers of the Ohio Presbytery, let us turn again to Redstone Presbytery and follow its progress after the division. The first meeting

¹⁰³ David Elliott, *Life of Macurdy*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁴ William S. Kennedy, *The Plan of Union*, p. 143.

¹⁰⁵ S. J. M. Eaton, *History of the Presbytery of Erie*, p. 214.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 410.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

¹¹⁰ *History of the Presbytery of Washington*, p. 127.

subsequent to the separation was held at Mount Pleasant, December 24, 1793. The following were the members: The Rev. Messrs. James Power, John McPherrin, Samuel Porter, George Hill, William Swan, James Findley, James Dunlap, and Jacob Jennings, eight in all.¹¹¹ The following year, David Smith was installed as pastor of the churches at George's Creek and Union, and three years later he left to accept the call from Rehoboth and Roundhill Churches where he remained until his death. In 1795 the Presbytery was weakened by the loss by death of Rev. James Findley, one of its most admired members. The following year, Rev. Samuel Ralston supplied the churches at Bethel and Ebenezer on the Black Lick River. Here he remained about a year and was dismissed to the Ohio Presbytery.

On account of failing health, several of the ministers felt the need of reducing their charges. Mr. Hill in 1798 was dismissed from the Wheatfield Church in order to devote his full time to the Donegal and Ligonier Churches. Mr. Porter also felt the necessity of resigning Poke Run in the same year and devoted all his time to the Congruity Church. Likewise Mr. Jennings was dismissed from the Muddy Creek Church. As these ministers had to lessen the extent of their labor, the necessity of young men coming forward was increasing. Also the number of requests for supplies became much greater than the Presbytery could fill. However, the members did not desire to lower the educational requirement of the candidates. Also wandering preachers whose credentials were not satisfactory were prohibited from preaching.¹¹² This necessitated increased work, which the members were willing to do rather than endanger the work. Mr. James Adams and Mr. Andrew Gwin were licensed to preach and spent much time filling vacancies, until they were able to be ordained.¹¹³

During the later part of the year 1798, Rev. Joseph Henderson came from the Presbytery of Carlisle and was enrolled as

¹¹¹ *Minutes of the Redstone Presbytery*, p. 105.

¹¹² *Minutes Redstone Presbytery*, pp. 131, 144.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

a member of the Redstone Presbytery. He became pastor of the churches of Ebenezer and Bethel, both of which were in Allegheny County.¹¹⁴ In the same year, Mr. Adams, a man educated and trained by the members of the Redstone Presbytery, was ordained and installed as pastor of the churches at Muddy Creek and George's Creek. Thus there were now ten members in the Redstone Presbytery. Mr. Gwin, a licentiate, was dismissed to the Ohio Presbytery in order to accept a call from the churches of Pigeon Creek and Pike Run.¹¹⁵ During the spring of 1800 the Presbytery licensed Mr. William Moorehead to preach as a probationer and to spend his time filling some of the many vacant churches.¹¹⁶ The same year the Presbytery was further strengthened by the addition of Rev. Francis Laird, formerly a member of the Carlisle Presbytery, who had accepted a call from the united congregations of Puckety and Poke Run.¹¹⁷ Also Rev. John Black was received from the same Presbytery and was appointed stated supply for Greensburg and Unity. At the close of the eighteenth century there were therefore twelve members belonging to the Redstone Presbytery.

Mr. John Boyd, who had gone through a series of trials, was licensed as a probationer and filled the vacant churches, being compelled to travel over a wide stretch of territory.¹¹⁸ During the following year he accepted a call from the Union and Fairfield Churches. During the fall of 1801 two licentiates from neighboring Presbyteries were admitted, Mr. Abraham Boyd and Mr. James McLane, who were appointed to fill vacancies. The former of these did not stay long as he, along with Mr. John Boyd, was dismissed in the fall of that same year in order to be taken under the care of the newly organized Presbytery of Erie.¹¹⁹

During the later years of the eighteenth century, the num-

¹¹⁴ D. H. Sloan, *A History of the Presbytery of Kittanning*, pp. 112-170.

¹¹⁵ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone*, p. 154.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹¹⁹ S. J. Eaton, *History of the Presbytery of Erie*, p. 212.

ber of churches in Western Pennsylvania had grown so rapidly and the country was being filled so quickly with settlers, that the Synod of Virginia saw the necessity of making a new Presbytery. Accordingly, at a meeting held in Winchester, Virginia, October 2, 1801, the Presbytery of Erie was formed. The territory of this new Presbytery was taken largely from the Ohio Presbytery and included the region "north and northwest of the Ohio and Allegheny Rivers unto the place where the Ohio River crosses the western boundary of Pennsylvania."¹²⁰ This Presbytery included seven members, namely: Rev. Messrs. James Satterfield, William Wylie, Thomas Hughes, William Wick, Samuel Tait, Joseph Stockton, and Robert Lee. In addition, there were two licentiates, John and Abraham Boyd.¹²¹ At this time the Ohio Presbytery had nineteen ministers and over thirty churches¹²² and the Redstone Presbytery had twelve ministers and thirty churches.¹²³

By the division of the Virginia Synod in 1802, the Synod of Pittsburgh was formed to include the three Western Pennsylvania Presbyteries of Redstone, Ohio and Erie.¹²⁴ During the eighteenth century, therefore, the Presbyterian Church had its beginning in Western Pennsylvania and developed so rapidly as to necessitate, two years later, a Synod of its own having three Presbyteries.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

¹²⁰ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 217.

¹²¹ S. J. M. Eaton, *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

¹²² Letter of Rev. T. Moore in the *New York Missionary Magazine*, May, 1801.

¹²³ E. H. Gillett, as cited, Vol. I, p. 471.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 502.

JOURNAL

OF THE

Presbyterian Historical Society

VOL. X.

SEPTEMBER, 1919

NOS. 3 AND 4.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PRESBYTERIANISM IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

BY REV. WILLIAM WILSON MCKINNEY, A.M.

PART II.*

The exact date when churches were built in Western Pennsylvania is a matter of dispute. Dr. Smith asserts that no churches or meeting-houses were erected prior to 1790.¹ He states that the early places of meeting were in the open air in a location partly sheltered from the weather. A log or tree stump formed the pulpit while the people were seated on logs, the hardiness of the early settlers making possible such a meeting-house. Dr. Smith in all probability obtained his authority for the statement regarding the date of building of the early churches from Judge Wilkeson's *Early Recollections of the West*, which contains such an assertion.

On the other hand, James Veech in an address on "The Secular History of South-western Pennsylvania as connected with the Presbyterian Church" takes exception to this statement. A deed dated July 1, 1773, for four acres of ground where a "meeting house is now being built" is on record at Mount Moriah, located in the south-western part of Fayette County. Dr. Veech also quotes Dr. McMillan's journal where

* For Part I see this JOURNAL, Vol. X, pp. 57-83.

¹ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 44.

he states that he preached at "Fork Meeting-House" on the third Sabbath of August, 1775. The Redstone Presbytery during the years 1781-'93 met repeatedly at such places as Laurel Hill and Bethel, while the minutes of the Presbytery state that the Presbytery met at lower or "Upper Meeting House" in the Forks, etc. It would thus appear from this and other data quoted by Dr. Veech that he is correct in his statement that meeting-houses were early built. The presence of settled pastors at this period and the ease of building a meeting-house also lend color to the belief that meeting-houses were erected prior to 1790.

The early churches or meeting-houses were constructed in the same manner and of the same materials as the private homes, except that the meeting-houses were larger.² Unhewn logs formed the framework and likewise the seats. Later, hewn logs were used and shingles for the roof. It was a long time before anything better was constructed especially in the more sparsely settled regions. These churches were not heated, but the people suffered no ill effects as they were accustomed to the exposure and wore proper clothing. It was not until about 1803, or even later, that stoves were introduced into the churches.³ In the summer the meetings were usually held in the open air in some pleasant grove.

When the first preachers settled west of the Allegheny Mountains, the support given them was not very bountiful. True, the people did the best they could, but their best was poor, owing to their own poverty. Hence all the early ministers had to supplement their income by cultivating a farm.⁴ The amount offered them was comparatively large, but the payment was often delayed. Mr. Smith during his early ministry at Upper Buffalo was badly in need of money, which was very scarce, owing to the suspension of trade caused by the Indian attacks. No money had been paid Mr. Smith for three years, and the time came when he was told by the man

² S. J. M. Eaton, *History of the Presbytery of Erie*, p. 18.

³ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 50.

⁴ S. J. M. Eaton, as cited, p. 13.

from whom he had bought his farm on credit that either he must pay or depart. This danger of losing their pastor caused the people to unite in a great effort to obtain the money. A large quantity of wheat was ground into flour and, despite the great danger, was taken to New Orleans by an old man, by the name of Smiley, and his two helpers. Here it was sold at a good price and the full debt to Mr. Smith was paid, and he continued with them for many years.⁵ Mr. Power had to discontinue his work at Unity, six miles from where Greensburg now stands, because of the failure of that congregation to pay him his salary.⁶

The minutes of both the Presbyteries contain numerous examples of the slowness with which the money due the minister was paid. At almost every meeting of the Presbyteries several of the clergymen reported that their salary was in arrears. The length of time the money was overdue varied greatly. Sometimes only a few weeks had lapsed since the money was due, but more often many months intervened. Sometimes as long as a year and a half would pass before the money was paid. Mr. Power on another occasion reported that \$1015.00 was due him from his congregation. However, as the population increased and the people obtained a more profitable return from their farms, the salary became more assured and the ministers could devote all their attention to the spiritual needs of the people without looking after their farms.

It is interesting to note the salary of these pioneer ministers. Mr. McMillan and Mr. Smith received \$750.00 yearly, while Mr. Power, Mr. Dunlap and Mr. Findley received about \$600.00 or \$650.00. However, not all of this was paid in money, provisions being given to cover about half of the required amount. Living expenses at that time were very low, most of the food being raised on the farm or shot in the nearby woods.⁷ A large part of the clothing was made at home. The price of the

⁵ Reported by Rev. James Miller. Printed in *Old Bedstone*, p. 71.

⁶ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Bedstone* (April 9, 1786).

⁷ Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on Settlement of Western Pennsylvania*, p. 137.

farms was also low, so that the ministers could purchase and eventually pay for good farms. They usually remained in one place and so could improve the farms and homes as their means increased. Very little furniture was needed and the minister was not required to live in style. So the condition of these men soon improved and in common with their neighbors they began to own slaves who cultivated the farms. At least six of the early ministers in the Redstone Presbytery were slave-holders.⁸ However, they treated their slaves kindly and instructed them in religion, so that they became respected members of the church and took active parts especially in singing.

The churches of these early presbyteries were not selfish. Not only did they support themselves but they contributed more or less freely to missionary work. Frequent reports of these contributions were sent to the presbytery, and the sums received were comparatively large.⁹ Also, the churches gave money to send delegates from the presbyteries to the meetings of Synod and to the General Assembly.¹⁰ As the Ohio and Redstone Presbyteries were far removed from the East, a journey to the General Assembly involved much time as the roads were poor and the traveling difficult. The expense of the ministers while on these trips were paid by the churches.

The churches in the Presbyteries of Western Pennsylvania during this century were distinctly rural. Of course, when the first churches were established there were no towns and all the country was sparsely inhabited. However, even when towns had grown up, the most vigorous spiritual life was still in the country. The religious atmosphere in the country churches was far better than in the towns, and the men of illustrious piety were chiefly members of the country churches. The town people cared little for religion, and much profanity prevailed there. "A traveler visiting the towns and villages would have thought he was in a heathen land, but visiting the

⁸ Joseph Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

⁹ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone*, pp. 165, 172.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 152, 164, 169.

country district he would have thought that he had gotten into an earthly Canaan."¹¹ Also the towns and cities received their supply of ministers from the country churches, as they did not support ministers of their own. Pittsburgh, Washington, and Wheeling for many years had to ask presbytery to send them ministers. The country churches responded to their call in an active manner and strove hard to establish permanent churches.

Although several men had made missionary tours through the Pittsburgh district, and although there were Presbyterian chaplains at Fort Pitt, yet the first call for supplies from Pittsburgh was on April 13, 1784, three years after the formation of the Redstone Presbytery.¹² Other requests were made at infrequent intervals until the arrival of Rev. Samuel Barr in October of 1785.¹³ Having received some money from Philadelphia and two and a half lots of ground from the Penn heirs, in September, 1787, he established a log church. It was a building of moderate dimensions, built of square timber.¹⁴ Mr. Barr remained here until 1789. The church received occasional supplies until November, 1792, when Mr. Samuel M. Mahan was called. As the Presbytery refused to license him, he departed within a year.¹⁵ From 1793 to 1800 the church was almost deserted. Only an occasional supply visited the church and the Presbytery took very little interest owing to a misunderstanding between the people and the Presbytery.¹⁶ Rev. Robert Steele during 1800-'02 preached here as a supply on probation. Being finally accepted as a member of the Redstone Presbytery he was installed as pastor, and remained until his death, March 22, 1810.¹⁷ The log church remained until 1805 when a brick building was erected surrounding the old one. After the new church was finished, the old log one was

¹¹ Joseph Smith, as cited, p. 219.

¹² *Centennial Volume of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh*, p. 16.

¹³ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone*, p. 20.

¹⁴ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 276.

¹⁵ *Minutes of the Redstone Presbytery*, p. 103.

¹⁶ *Centennial Volume of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh*, p. 29.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 36.

torn down. The funds for the second building were raised by a lottery, according to the usual custom.¹⁸

Owing to the responsibility which the early minister placed upon his elders, a number of very efficient ones were developed. After obtaining experience in church service by conducting family worship, the elders often took charge of the services in the church. This was especially true in those churches which were without regular pastors. Among the most famous of these elders was Robert Campbell of the Donegal Church. His special delight was to attend communion services and to help the pastors arouse interest in religion. He spent much time visiting the godless families in order to talk and pray with them.¹⁹ Another famous elder was Philip Jackson, commonly known as the "praying elder," who was converted by Rev. Joseph Smith and became an elder in 1786. He often retired to the woods for long seasons of prayer, and never neglected an opportunity to speak to a man about his soul's salvation. At one time, his pastor, Dr. McCurdy, had asked a visiting minister to preach. At a subsequent meeting Mr. Jackson in Dr. McCurdy's presence prayed that the Lord would keep the pastor from the sin of inviting ministers to preach merely out of compliment to them.²⁰ Judge Edgar, Ebenezer Coe and William Smiley were other elders who were of great help to their pastors.

No account of these early days of Presbyterianism would be complete without some mention of the work of the pastors' wives. These pioneer ministers were blessed with very godly helpmates, who contributed greatly to their wonderful success. Mrs. Smith is especially to be noted in this connection. She spent most of her time, after her husband's death, visiting the poor and the sick and speaking to many about Christianity.²¹ Dr. McMillan's wife frequently conducted family worship in her home, and in her neighbor's home, during the

¹⁸ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 276.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

²⁰ David Elliott, *Life of Macurdy*, p. 102.

²¹ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 61.

absence of her husband.²² Mrs. Power managed her husband's farm at Mount Pleasant so skillfully that Dr. Power was able to devote his whole time to the ministry and still live in a very comfortable and respectable manner.²³ The wives of the ministers nobly bore their share of their husband's burdens, and so the work grew by leaps and bounds.

Something ought here to be said concerning the attitude of the Presbyterian Church toward the Whiskey Rebellion.

During the latter half of the eighteenth century, the use of whiskey was very general in Western Pennsylvania. Instead of opposing this general custom, most people felt that total abstinence was not wise. It was the custom to use whiskey both as a medicine and as a beverage. Whenever a friend called, the courteous thing was to serve liquor. It formed a necessary part of a wedding, funeral, or social gathering.²⁴ Even our early ministers shared in the use of liquor and did not oppose its use. Franklin in his *Autobiography* states that Rev. Mr. Beatty, the chaplain at Fort Pitt, willingly accepted his proposal that the daily allowance of rum be given out to the soldiers by Rev. Mr. Beatty after prayers. In thanking Franklin for his suggestion, the chaplain said that never were prayers better attended.²⁵ The clergymen also drank liquor freely and openly. One day, Rev. Dr. McMillan and Rev. Mr. Patterson on their way to Presbytery stopped at a tavern to get a drink. Mr. Patterson, before they began to drink, asked a protracted blessing, during which Dr. McMillan drained both glasses, and in reply to the rather blank look of Mr. Patterson said, "You must watch as well as pray."²⁶ However, in spite of the wide use of alcohol, intemperance was not very common. This was due to several causes; among them being the ruggedness of the people, the necessity of being always on the alert against the Indians, and possibly also the freedom of the whiskey from adulteration.

²² Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

²⁴ Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on the Settlement of Western Pennsylvania*.

²⁵ W. B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, p. 121.

²⁶ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 33.

Whiskey was not only a drink, but a form of money as well. Currency was very scarce and whiskey became almost a measure of value. It was commonly used in the purchase of household goods, groceries, and other necessities. Grain was the chief product of Western Pennsylvania, but it was difficult to take it to a market because of the poor condition of the roads. A keg of whiskey was much easier to transport than the grain used to make the whiskey. A good pack-horse could carry about five bushels of rye, but in the form of whiskey he could carry the product of from fifteen to twenty bushels.²⁷ Besides, they were sure of a market for the distilled spirits, but not so sure of one for the grain. It is little wonder that we find much whiskey distilled in Western Pennsylvania. As early as 1784 a few stills were set up in the district around Pittsburgh. The business rapidly developed, and in 1792 these stills were very numerous, there being one, in some places, in every fourth or fifth house.²⁸

Since the use of whiskey was so extensive in the economic life of the people, there is little wonder that the government's tax on the product was opposed and that the enforcement of the law caused the Whiskey Insurrection. This government tax added about twenty-five per cent to the cost of living. This was considered detrimental to their interests and they determined to resist all efforts of the government to enforce the law. This opposition was not caused by any fondness for the use of whiskey. It was simply the result of thinking that they were oppressively taxed. It is needless here to attempt to describe the methods used to oppose the collection of the tax, the people who engaged in it, and the measures employed by the government to quell the insurrection.²⁹ It is sufficient to state that the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, although opposing the tax and being very fond of tarring and feathering their opponents, did not take a single human life. A few of their

²⁷ Warner and Company, *History of Allegheny County*, Vol. I, p. 152.

²⁸ J. N. Boucher, *Pittsburgh and her People*, Vol. I, p. 299.

²⁹ William Findley, *History of the Insurrection in Western Pennsylvania*, is of great value.

own number were killed in the attacks on the revenue-inspector's house, but no attempt was made to retaliate.³⁰

The ministers of that period, while not opposing the use of whiskey still, were the friends of the government and used their influence in restraining violence and in urging the people to obey the laws of the land.

Both the Presbyteries of Redstone and Ohio in 1795 passed the following resolutions regarding the insurrection: "Resolved, That if any of those persons who, during the late disturbances, had an active hand in burning property, robbing the mail and destroying official papers of the officers of the government, shall apply for distinguishing privileges in our church, they shall not be admitted until they give satisfactory evidence of their repentance. The Presbytery also did and do hereby declare their hearty disapprobation of all riotous, illegal and unconstitutional combinations against the government, the laws or officers of the government."³¹ The Ohio Presbytery added these words: "and do, in the most earnest and importunate manner, recommend and enjoin it upon the people under their care to be subject to all magistrates in lawful authority."³²

On June 17, 1794, five hundred men gathered at Couche's Fort near the Bethel meeting-house, of which the Rev. John Clark, then an old man, was pastor, for the purpose of forcibly opposing the collection of taxes. Mr. Clark pleaded with them to desist from the undertaking, but in vain.³³ Some of the ministers did not desire to introduce the subject of the Insurrection in their pulpits because of its political aspect, being willing, however, to use their influence during the week in the interest of the law and order. Mr. Porter took a very decided stand against the insurrection both in the pulpit and in his pastoral work. In this he was successful, and the people of Congruity and its vicinity took no active part in the

³⁰ G. S. Fisher, *The Making of Pennsylvania*, p. 167.

³¹ *Minutes of the Presbytery of Redstone*, p. 115.

³² *Minutes of the Presbytery of Ohio, 1795 (in manuscript form)*.

³³ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 389.

rebellion. He also traveled around the county attempting to restrain the people. Preaching at Canonsburg at the invitation of Dr. McMillan, he was very successful in overcoming the prejudices of the people. Many of those who were in favor of armed resistance and who at first refused to listen were won over to the cause of legal conduct by his able and tactful presentation of the subject.³⁴

Dr. McMillan on one occasion delayed communion service until he found out who would refuse to sign a declaration of fidelity, meaning to bar from the sacrament those who opposed.³⁵ So great was the respect of the people for these ministers that no minister was ever threatened or insulted. They soon became the only ones who dared to speak against the fury of the times. It was during that period that Dr. McMillan showed his ability as a politician. As the insurrection was dying out, a member of Congress from the Counties of Washington and Allegheny was to be elected. Thinking that no one of the four candidates fulfilled his idea of the man for the position, he called together a few men at Canonsburg and nominated Albert Gallatin, who was subsequently elected. Dr. McMillan continued to have great influence, and such men as H. H. Brackenbridge sought his favor and influence.³⁶

The bold stand which these ministers took during these troublesome times thus added prestige and influence to the faithful preachers. This increased confidence of the people in their pastors, aided their work, and, after the excitement had subsided, paved the way for the great revival of 1802.

Having noticed the influence of the church in the face of popular excitement, we will now picture some of the customs and methods of work of these early churches.

In a previous chapter, some of the activities of the early churches were described. Let us now look at some of their customs viewing especially the church services. The most important service and the one to which everybody came from

³⁴ W. B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, Vol. III, p. 546.

³⁵ Joseph Smith, *Old Eedstone*, p. 253.

³⁶ *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 399.

far and near was the communion service, which was usually held once a year.³⁷

As the numbers were too large to be accommodated in the churches, a grove, free from undergrowth, along a hillside, if possible, was selected. The minister preached from a covered platform, seven by nine, raised four or five feet from the ground. This platform, called the tent, was placed somewhat down the hillside so that the people could be gathered in front in a kind of natural amphitheatre.³⁸

When partaking of the sacrament, the people were seated at long tables extending from the platform back through the congregation. Logs hewn on one side only, joined together in pairs and raised to the ordinary height of a table and supported by blocks of wood, formed the table upon which the elements were placed. Snowy linen covered the tables, and napkins covered the elements. Other logs formed the seats. These logs were occupied only by the communicants.³⁹ As the number attending the service was too large for all to be accommodated at once, the rest were seated on the ground or upon the logs in the vicinity around the log tables within the range of the speaker's voice. As soon as one set of communicants had partaken of the elements, they arose from the tables to occupy seats in the near vicinity. These tables were thus successively filled and vacated as many as seven times.

The service itself was long and impressive. As the minister arose to offer prayer, every one also arose, the men with uncovered heads. After the reading of the psalm, everybody joined so heartily in the singing that the forests resounded with the melody. This was followed by a long prayer and by the singing of another psalm. Then followed the sermon and the partaking of the communion.⁴⁰ Oftentimes another sermon closed the service, so that it was usually dusk before the meeting adjourned.

³⁷ S. J. M. Eaton, *History of the Presbytery of Erie*, p. 25.

³⁸ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 153.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

Not only was the service long but a long period of preparation was indulged in. The Thursday preceeding communion Sabbath was observed as a fast-day.⁴¹ This service was well attended and much time was spent in praying and preaching, the service often continuing till late at night. Public worship was also held Saturday and the following Monday. On Saturday or Sunday morning tokens were given to those who had faithfully performed their Christian duties.⁴² Only those who had tokens were permitted to partake of the communion. Also a public confession of sin was required before the professed Christian was admitted to the communion service. These communion seasons were often the occasion of a renewed interest in religion, and many revivals had their beginning in these gatherings. They were looked forward to by both the people and the ministers.⁴³

The fact that the services extended over several days added to the social side of the pioneer life. The occasions for large social gatherings were few and the communion service was therefore a happy reunion, raising the minds of the people from the worries and cares of domestic life. As many of the visitors had journeyed from ten to fifteen miles, they stayed at the homes of those living nearest the meeting house.⁴⁴ Many happy marriages can be traced to these religious services.

The usual church services were also very long, often lasting from ten in the morning until nearly dusk. The sermon varied from an hour to an hour and a half and the prayers and psalms were far from brief.⁴⁵ Usually two services were held each Sunday, with an hour's intermission, during which the people ate their biscuits which they had brought, or took a drink at a nearby spring. Owing to the hardships and the long hours of labor of these pioneers, it was often difficult for them to keep awake at these services, especially on a warm

⁴¹ S. J. M. Eaton, *History of the Erie Presbytery*, p. 22.

⁴² *Presbyterian Centenary Convention*, p. 227.

⁴³ Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 159.

⁴⁴ S. J. M. Eaton, *History of the Presbytery of Erie*, p. 25.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

day. To overcome this tendency to doze, those members of the congregation who felt sleepy would rise and stand up for a time.

Thus often between forty and sixty people would be standing, trying to ward off sleep. It is extremely doubtful if the preacher took the hint that he was preaching too long, even if he saw the majority of his audience on their feet.

The people came to church plainly clad, as their circumstances would permit of no display. Coats were worn in winter, but were rarely seen in summer. The ministers usually wore coats, but if the day was warm,⁴⁶ would take them off when they began to preach—a prototype of our present-day strenuous revivalists. In these services only the psalms according to the old Rouse version were sung. However, at family worship and sometimes at prayer-meeting the later version known as Watt's was used, and some old hymns were sung. The singing was one of the bright features of the services.⁴⁷ All sang as best and as loud as they could. A precentor usually led the singing and read out the lines, two at a time, for the benefit of the newcomers, as few printed books were in use. In some of the churches the singing was very good; Mr. Dodd's church at Ten Mile is recorded as being favorably known in this respect.⁴⁸

Infants were baptised at the regular church service as soon after birth as the parents would be justified in bringing the babes to church. A solemn promise to observe the religious training of the child was required from the parents. The chief religious instruction was a knowledge of the Shorter Catechism. This was recited on Sabbath evenings and both the young and old took part.⁴⁹ The preacher in his pastoral visits was sure to examine the children and both parents and children were anxious to receive his commendation. The Bible

⁴⁶ Joseph Smith, as cited, p. 164.

⁴⁷ S. J. M. Eaton, *History of the Presbytery of Erie*, p. 21.

⁴⁸ H. Allison, *Historical Sketches of Ten Mile*, p. 20.

⁴⁹ S. J. M. Eaton, as cited, p. 25.



was diligently studied by all alike and such other religious books as could be secured were read. *Pilgrim's Progress*, Baxter's *Call*, Owen *On Prayer*, Boston's *Fourfold State* were among the books most widely used.⁵⁰ Besides, religion was one of the main topics of conversation. Some of the elders became very proficient in theology and delighted to discuss the deepest subjects with their pastors.

In addition to the church services and the religious exercises which the preachers were accustomed to hold in the various homes as they fulfilled their pastoral duties, prayer-meetings were usually held on Wednesday evenings at the minister's home. To these meetings, which extended until late at night, the people came from far and near. The elders took a prominent part in these services. Family worship also was regularly held in a large number of homes. The early ministers strove hard to have family worship conducted in each home by the head of the family, and many homes were the scene of devout services.

The early ministers were very desirous that young men looking forward to the work of the ministry should be well equipped for their work. Great care was taken in the education and training of young ministers. Several years would often pass between the time when the candidate declared his intention of entering upon the work of the ministry and the time when he was licensed to preach. The examination of the candidates was in the hands of the respective presbyteries and any member was permitted to ask questions, testing the candidate's knowledge of the original languages, philosophy, the Bible, church history, and church government, and also his piety and faith. At least one exegesis, a homily and a lecture to presbytery were required. In addition, the candidate was called upon to preach before presbytery on several occasions. After the examination and trials had been successfully passed, the candidate was licensed to preach on probation and was called a licentiate. He was under care of presbytery but was not a member and spent his time filling the vacant churches.

⁵⁰ Joseph Smith, as cited, p. 162.

After thus receiving practical experience and being tested in his ability to fulfill the duties of a minister for several years, he was finally ordained.⁵¹

Presbytery was equally careful in the matter of permitting ministers and candidates for the ministry from other districts to preach within the bounds of their presbytery. The credentials of these visiting preachers were carefully examined, and if the members of presbytery had the slightest doubt about a man's qualifications, he was not permitted to preach until each member had satisfied himself that the minister was in good and regular standing. Oftentimes they would call upon the Synod or General Assembly for advice and would await its decision. Several pretenders who visited Western Pennsylvania made necessary these precautions.⁵²

The case of Robert Steel illustrates the care with which the Redstone Presbytery examined a man's credentials before permitting him to preach. Rev. Mr. Steel was ordained to the ministry by the Presbytery of Londonderry in Ireland and desired to join the Redstone Presbytery.⁵³ Upon being asked for his credentials, he stated that it was possible to obtain testimonials of his standing as a gospel minister only from his congregation. Besides, he produced letters from New York, Philadelphia and Norfolk regarding his character and good standing in Ireland as a minister. Fearing to take action, the Presbytery referred the question to the Synod,⁵⁴ who in turn referred it to the General Assembly, by whom it was stated that he must meet the requirements of Redstone Presbytery and satisfy the members of that Presbytery. Accordingly, he was compelled to submit to the same examination as the other candidates had to pass and spend the same length of time on probation. His claim that he had been ordained previously by the Irish Church was of no avail, and he was treated exactly as any other candidate for the ministry from

⁵¹ *History of the Washington Presbytery*, p. 18.

⁵² Joseph Smith, as cited, p. 130.

⁵³ *History of the Washington Presbytery*, p. 18.

⁵⁴ *Minutes of the Redstone Presbytery*, p. 151.

a foreign country would be treated. Nearly three years passed before he was admitted to membership in the Presbytery.⁵⁵

Such has been the history of the Presbyterian Church in Western Pennsylvania during the eighteenth century. In a paper of this kind only the more important facts can be mentioned. An attempt has been made to show the beginnings of the movement, tracing it through its infancy until at the opening of the nineteenth century it stands out as a great force influencing every part of the life of this region. A great event it was when the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians moved over the mountains and settled Western Pennsylvania. They stood on the side of freedom. The spirit of self-sacrifice lived in all their hearts. They performed as heroic deeds of devotion as were ever recorded in the annals of the past. May we, their descendants, realizing somewhat their dangers, trials, and hardships, appreciate more fully our debt of gratitude to these heroic figures and receive an inspiration from the past which will strengthen our moral fibre for the duties of our day and generation.

⁵⁵ Joseph Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 163.