

CHAPTER XIII.

ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

RANDOLPH COUNTY.

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY REV. W. J. SMILEY.



THE history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Randolph county goes back to the year 1818. To the Rev. Samuel Wylie belongs the credit of the planting of the church. He was born in Connty Antrim, Ireland, February 19, 1790; came to the United States in 1807; entered the University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated in the class of 1811;

prepared for the ministry in the Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, under the care of his uncle, Dr. S. B. Wylie, and was licensed to preach in May, 1815, at Philadelphia, by the Middle Presbytery.

In the summer of 1817 he visited various places in the West, passing through Illinois and continuing his travels as far as Boonville, Mo. On his return he again passed through Illinois and spent the winter in supplying the vacancies in Tennessee and South Carolina.

At the meeting of the Synod in Pittsburg in the latter part of May, 1818, he reported his travels and the prospect for church extension in the West. Synod ordered the Middle Presbytery to take him on trial for ordination, and he was accordingly ordained in Pittsburg, Pa., on the 2d of June, 1818, and sent as a missionary to Southern Illinois. Mr. Wylie reached Kaskaskia the last day of July following and immediately entered upon his work.

The field of operation at first was Randolph county, though it afterward embraced parts of Perry, Washington and St. Clair. A number of families belonging to the Associate Reformed church in South Carolina had moved into the county early in the present century, and made a settlement near the present town of Preston. They had been organized into a congregation by Rev. S. Brown, of Kentucky, a number of years before Mr. Wylie's arrival, and being without preaching from their own ministers, by request, Mr. Wylie made his principal preaching place with them. Members of the Reformed Presbyterian church began to come in. James M. Gray was the first to arrive. He came in October, and was followed immediately by his father-in-law, James Wilson, and family. They came from near Vincennes, Indiana, where they had lived a number of years after leaving South Carolina. They first settled near Kaskaskia, but finally located about three miles south of Sparta.

John McDill, Sr., and Hugh McKelvey, from South Carolina, came out in the summer of 1818, and bought land in Township 4-5. On their way home they stopped in Tennessee with William Edgar, Samuel Nisbet and Samuel Little, who had removed from South Carolina a number of

years before, and informed them of the mission begun in Illinois. They immediately set out for Kaskaskia and purchased land, and Messrs. Edgar and Little moved out in the spring of 1819. Mr. Nisbet, however, was detained and did not arrive until September. Mr. Dill did not move out until November, 1819, though his son, John, came in the spring of that year, and began to improve his father's place. Mr. McKelvey did not come until 1820. Mrs. Elizabeth Ritchie came in 1818; John McMillan and family, from Princeton, Indiana, arrived about the close of 1818 or the beginning of 1819, and settled on Plum creek, near the present town of Houston. David Cathcart and his son-in-law, William Campbell, from South Carolina, came in the spring of 1819, and settled in the lower end of Grand Cote Prairie. Alexander Alexander arrived in the spring of 1819, and bought land near the old grave-yard, and after improving his place, returned to South Carolina and brought out his family in the latter part of 1819. His father-in-law, John McDill, Sr., James Munford and John Dickey, with their families came at the same time. John McMillan, of the Associate church, also came with them and settled between Eden and Sparta, and Munford and Dickey settled north-east of Eden. James Strahan, from western Pennsylvania, came in the spring of 1819, and settled first down toward Kaskaskia, but finally in the west end of Grand Cote.

Mr. Wylie continued to preach in Kaskaskia and in the Irish settlement and among the Covenanters, until the arrival of William Edgar and Samuel Little, when the first session was constituted, May 24, 1819, at James McClurken's, about six miles southwest of Sparta. William Edgar had been ordained to the eldership in the Rocky creek congregation, South Carolina, in 1801, and Saml. Little in Hephzibah congregation, Tennessee, at its organization in the spring of 1815.

This may be reckoned the formal organization of Bethel Reformed Presbyterian Church. It is thought by some that the first communion was held at that time.

A call was made soon after for Rev. J. Wylie and forwarded to Synod to meet in Conococheague in August, 1819. The call itself bears no date, but the letter accompanying it bears date June 7, 1819, and is signed on behalf of the meeting by James Wilson and Samuel Little.

The following names, with their accompanying subscriptions, are attached to the call, viz.: James Wilson, \$20; Samuel Little, \$15; James McClurken, \$15; William Edgar, \$10; James Strahan, \$12; James M. Gray, \$10; David Cathcart, \$10; H. H. Christie, \$5; John McMillan, \$15; Alexander Alexander, \$10; John McDill, \$10; Thos. G. Armour, \$10; Elizabeth Ritchie, \$20. The names of fifteen others follow, who had not the opportunity of signing in their proper place, viz.: Jennet C. Edgar, Nancy Wilson, Sarah Wilson, Rachel Wilson, Jepnet Strahan, John Wilson, Jr., Martin Wilson, Jenny Wilson, Jenny Gray, Jenny Little, Susanna McClurken, Ann Strahan, Margaret McMillan, Mary Edgar. Accompanying the call was a subscription amounting to \$150 from the Associate Reformed congregation already referred to, for which they desired part of Mr. Wylie's time. The matter is thus referred to in the letter: "We beg leave to add that there is in this county a very

respectable congregation belonging to the Associate Reformed church. These people live amongst us, or more properly, we live amongst them. They are (we believe) prepared to supplicate for part of Mr. Wylie's time. The places where he would preach to them would be tolerably convenient to his own people. This circumstance would appear accommodating to us at present. We have not, however, craved their assistance; but we are more than willing to further their edification and comfort."

The letter urges the acceptance of the call strongly and skillfully. Synod referred the call to the Western Presbytery, and at a meeting of that court held in Hartford, Indiana, October 11, 1819, it was presented and accepted, and the Rev. John Kell appointed to install Mr. Wylie as pastor. For some reason the installation did not take place.

Presbytery met in Bethel congregation in the spring of 1820. The question of Mr. Wylie's settlement was again brought up, but it was deemed best to wait another year. At this time a communion was held at Samuel Little's, and James Mumford and James McClurken were added to the session; the former had been an elder in South Carolina; the latter was formerly a member of the Associate Reformed church, and having joined the Covenanters in 1819, was chosen and ordained to the fellowship at this time.

A second call was made out for Mr. Wylie May 22, 1821. It was signed by thirty-five members, who subscribed \$208 for his support. The names on the call show the financial but not the numerical strength of the congregation. It is probable that the number of the membership at this time was about seventy. The call was presented to Presbytery on the 24th of May, and at length accepted, Mr. Wylie agreeing to give the congregation half his time, leaving the other half to be employed in mission work. He was installed pastor on the 28th of May, 1821, over the congregation which he had gathered in the field where he had labored now nearly three years as a missionary.

All the names of those contributing for ministerial support on the former call are on this except those of James M. Gray, who had died, Thos. G. Armour and H. H. Christie. The following new names appear: Thomas Blair, who came from Pittsburg, but remained only a short time and then returned; Joseph Weir, from South Carolina, who settled in Lively Prairie; Alexander McKelvey, who settled near his father, Hugh, in Grand Cote, in 1820; William Temple, William Marshall and James Beattie, who came together from the vicinity of Pittsburg in 1821, and settled northeast of Eden. Mr. Temple afterward located about three miles west of Sparta. James Mumford and John Dickey, whose arrival has already been noticed; John Alexander, who settled near his brother; Adam Edgar, son of William Edgar, and came at the same time; Ann McMillan (mother of John McMillan on Plum creek), and Mary Boyd, an unmarried woman who lived with her; Robert Bratney, who came from Tennessee in 1280; his son, Joseph, who came at the same time, was also a member. They settled west of Lively Prairie, near Preston. Robert Sinclair, who came from South Carolina and settled in Grand Cote; Samuel Nisbet, who arrived with his family from Tennessee

September 11, 1819, and settled east of Eden; Jeremiah Murphy, also from Tennessee, who settled in the lower part of the county, near Shiloh; James Gordon, son-in-law of James Wilson, who came from Indiana in the fall of 1819, settled south of Sparta, where his son, A. J. Gordon, now lives; Hugh McKelvey and Samuel Allan, who came in 1820; William Cambell, who came in the spring of 1819 with his father-in-law, David Cathcart, and James McWilliam, also from South Carolina, who settled on the place where John McClinton now lives. The subscriptions ranged from two to fifteen dollars.

Among other members who came at an early day may be mentioned Robert Moore and wife. He remained but a short time, but during his residence here he taught the first school in the neighborhood. This was probably in 1821, and the school-house was on sec. 7, town 5-5, southeast of Sparta. The next school was taught in the summer of 1822, by Gordon Ewing in a house southeast of Eden. Mr. Ewing came out from Philadelphia in the spring of 1822, along with Mrs. Wylie (mother of Rev. Wylie) and her daughter, Mrs. Dobbins. The following year he was engaged in teaching in an academy in Kaskaskia, along with Mr. Wylie. He was received as a student of theology by the Western Presbytery June 2, 1823, and subsequently became a minister in the Reformed Presbyterian church. While teaching in Kaskaskia he was a principal agent in securing the organization of a Sabbath-school in the fall of 1823. It was attended in the morning by the white "children, English and French, to the number of fifty, and in the afternoon by the blacks to the same number. Some of the most respectable citizens are engaged as teachers."

The congregation still continued to increase. The early records of session are missing, but a report prepared for Presbytery, bearing date March 25, 1825, gives the number of members received up to that time as follows: Received on testimonial, 77; on personal examination, 44. Of these, seven had removed to other congregations, and eight had died, leaving the membership at that date 106, and the number of families 51. The number of infant baptisms was 42.

The first places of preaching were under the trees of the forest, in cabins and in barns. The first house of worship was a frame 28x40 feet, built in 1823. It soon became too small to accommodate the growing congregation. It was decided first, July 14, 1827, to enlarge the house, and finally, February 11, 1830, to sell and build a new brick church.

Two sites were named for the new church—the one the old site lowland (about 200 yards south of the old graveyard); the other upland, about three-fourths of a mile northeast of the old church, within the present limits of Eden,—the location to be determined by the amount of the subscriptions in favor of each. The new site was chosen. A building committee was appointed, and the work let for \$800. Those in favor of the old site became dissatisfied, and the matter was finally referred to Presbytery for settlement.

Pending its settlement, a petition for a separate organization was presented, signed by 27 families, who favored the

old site and were opposed to the new church. The request was granted and a second congregation formed on the 5th of November, 1831.

The first elders in Bethel congregation, were in the new organization, and claiming this to be the original congregation, they prefixed the name Old to the original name Bethel, and are so known to this day. The new church was 45x60. It was inclosed in 1832, so that the congregation used it during that summer and the summer following.

For many years, a difference of opinion existed among ministers and members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, respecting the moral character of the United States government, and consequently a difference of opinion, respecting the practical application of the principles of the church on civil government.

This difference of opinion, was the occasion of a division in the body, in 1833. The general Synod was divided into two separate organizations, in August of that year.

The one retained the name General Synod, and the other is known as the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The former allows her members to decide for themselves, as to their participation in civil affairs, prohibiting only such connection with the government as involves immorality.

The latter does not allow her members to vote, or hold office, provided this implies support of the Constitution of the United States, or to sit on juries. This division affected nearly all the congregations in the body.

Bethel was divided. The pastor, and James Munford, J. K. Taylor, James Blair and Thomas Blair, members of session, with the majority of the congregation, adhered to General Synod.

A. McMillan and Jas. Coulter, with the minority of the congregation, took the side of the Synod. Old Bethel also sided with the Synod. James McClurken, however adhered to the General Synod, and returning to Bethel, he was again chosen ruling elder, March, 1834, an office which he filled until his death, Jan. 17th, 1851. A few other families returned about the same time.

The new church building was inclosed, but not yet finished. The question of ownership arose. Samuel Nisbet and Andrew Miller, the former with General Synod, the latter with the Synod, proposed a settlement. Mr. Miller chose the church, and each chose two arbitrators (they choosing a fifth) to whom the decision of the terms was left. They decided, that those taking the church should get all subscriptions given by those, not members of the church, and those with the General Synod should receive their own subscriptions back again.

In the spring of 1834, the congregation resolved to build a new brick church, 50x60, close by the second building. The old frame church was occupied by the congregation, while the new one was being built.

It was begun in 1834, and inclosed the following year. The whole cost was about \$2700, which was mostly provided for, by the sale of the pews.

In 1828, 69 families and 127 communicants are reported. In 1836, 90 families and 205 communicants are reported. The next year shows, 99 families and 233 communicants.

The congregation now began to colonize. As early as February, 1834, a petition was presented from Mud Creek, asking for supplies. Supplies were given from time to time, until June 12th, 1838; when the Mud Creek society was organized, as Salem congregation, John Hemphill and James McIntire, being ordained elders. James Wilson, an elder in Bethel, also belonged to the new organization. The society in Six mile, and that in Hill Prairie, received organization in 1842. The former took the name Concord, and the latter Hill Prairie. Dr. R. W. Marshall and Robert Mathews, were the first elders in Hill Prairie. We do not follow its history farther, save to say that in connection with Concord, it formed the pastoral charge of Rev. M. Harshaw, who was ordained to the ministry in the Bethel church Eden, Nov. 9th, 1842. The history of Concord will be given among the churches of Perry county. Grand Cote, on the northeast, took steps for an organization, in 1849, and it was effected at the house of James Robb, on the 8th of February, 1850. James Robb, and A. R. McKelvey, were chosen to the eldership, and ordained in Eden on the 7th of March, following. The membership numbered sixty.

Bethel still continued to flourish, and in 1858 there were over 280 communicants. At an earlier date there were over 350 communicants.

In 1860, another congregation called Smyrna, was organized in Opossumden Prairie, on the southwest. James C. Wilson and John H. Breckenridge, were ordained elders, and the membership numbered 32. After receiving supplies for a few years, it became disorganized, most of the members returning to Bethel.

In 1867, the United Presbyterians organized a congregation, about six miles north of Eden, and a number of families belonging to Bethel, residing in that vicinity, connected with it.

During this year and the year following, the entire denomination was stirred up, over the subjects of psalmody and communion. Geo. H. Stuart, of Philadelphia, a leading elder in the church, and a member of the General Synod at its meeting held in May, 1868, in Pittsburg, Pa., for insubordination to the Synod, expressed with reference to her rules, on the subjects before mentioned, was suspended. This action led to the withdrawal of quite a number of ministers and members from the fellowship of General Synod. Bethel was affected by it. The Scotch element in the congregation almost unanimously, withdrew and subsequently effected an organization in Sparta, in connection with the Old School Presbyterian Church. This church was organized on the 5th of June, 1869, with 60 members, most of whom were formerly members of Bethel. As many as 70 in all withdrew on this account.

In 1870 the question of union between the United and Reformed Presbyterian churches, was again agitated. A basis of Union, framed by a committee from the two bodies, was laid before the General Synod, in May, 1870, but was not adopted. It was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church.

The ministers of the Western Presbytery, with the exception of Rev. Dr. Wylie, in August, 1870, withdrew from

the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Concord, Hill Prairie, and Grand Cote, were divided, about one-third of the membership of each going into the U. P. Church. In Bethel, no new organization was attempted, but quite a number of families withdrew and connected with the United Presbyterian church in Sparta.

Previous to this action however, Rev. Dr. Wylie had at his own request, been released from the pastoral care of Bethel congregation. His release took effect on the 20th of February, 1870, when he had entered upon the 81st year of his age. That day being the Sabbath, he explained Psalm 90: 13—17, and preached in the forenoon from Rom. 8. 28, and in the afternoon from 2 Cor. 13: 11.

He still remained in the congregation, preaching as opportunity offered, in the different congregations, now destitute by the death or withdrawal of their pastors, — until called to his reward, March 20th, 1872.

He fell asleep peacefully, in the 83d year of his age, having nearly completed the 54th year of his labors as a missionary in that field, and the 57th of his ministry.

His last public service was at the opening of the new church in Grand Cote congregation, Jan. 14th, 1872. He explained Psalm 84, and preached the sermon from Hebrews 12: 28.

On the 28th of December, 1871, he presided in the moderation of a call for a pastor in Bethel. The call resulted in the choice of the writer, who accepted the call and was ordained and installed on the 5th of June, 1872, in the church of Eden.

Though the congregation had been greatly reduced through repeated divisions, it has since enjoyed a good degree of prosperity. In the spring of 1876, it was decided to remove from Eden, and locate in Sparta. Accordingly, the Methodist church, which was then offered for sale, was bought and completed, and the services of the congregation have been held in Sparta, since the first of July, 1876.

The records, as far as preserved, show that over a thousand members were received into full communion, during Mr. Wylie's ministry. The present membership is about 170. (Jan. 1883.) The financial affairs of the congregation are managed by a board of trustees, and a treasurer. The present members of the board are: S. F. Hyndman, J. F. Blair, Wm. H. Wilson, J. C. Wilson, J. M. Lackey, S. Baird, and Wm. C. Fullerton. J. C. Boyle is treasurer of the congregation.

The session consists of the pastor, W. J. Smiley, and the following ruling elders: John McCaughan, S. T. Nisbet, John Temple, J. G. Wylie, W. W. Hemphill, Wm. McIntyre, Hugh Nisbet, Neal McIntyre, and D. R. Stormont. The following persons have entered the ministry, from this congregation, viz: Gordon T. Ewing, Hugh A. McKelvey, Wm. T. Wylie, Robert Brown, R. C. Wyatt, and John B. Galloway.

List of Ruling Elders in Bethel Congregation, with time of entering upon office.

- * William Edgar, May 24, 1819.
- * Samuel Little, May 24, 1819.
- * James Munford, April 26, 1820.
- * James McLurken, April 26, 1820.
- * Archibald McMillan, April 12, 1822.
- * Thos. G. Armour, 1826 probably.
- * James Coulter, May 5, 1831.

- * John K. Taylor, Aug. 11, 1832.
- * James Blair, Aug. 11, 1832.
- * Thomas Blair, Aug. 11, 1832.
- * William Patterson, April 11, 1834.
- * Samuel Nisbet, April 11, 1834.
- * William Jamison, April 11, 1834.
- * John Fulton, May 20, 1835.

- * James Wilson, April 29, 1837.
- * John Campbell, Sept. 11, 1841.
- * James Wilson, Jr., Sept. 11, 1841.
- * John Richman, Sept. 11, 1841.
- * David Munford, Sept. 11, 1841.
- * Charles McKelvey, Feb. 23, 1843.
- * John McCaughan, Feb. 23, 1843.
- * Henry Wilson, Feb. 23, 1843.
- * Robert W. Marshall, M.D., about 1850.
- * William McHenry, Oct. 14, 1852.
- * John Wilson, Oct. 14, 1852.
- * James Craig, April 19, 1855.
- * Joseph McHenry, April 19, 1855.
- * Sam'l L. Boyd, April 19, 1855.

- * James Crawford, April 19, 1855.
- * Samuel Neil, Oct. 31, 1861.
- * Samuel W. McKelvey, April 30, 1863.
- * James P. Blair, April 30, 1863.
- * James B. Anderson, April 30, 1863.
- * Samuel T. Nisbet, April 30, 1863.
- * Milton McMillan, Sept. 21, 1871.
- * John Temple, Sept. 21, 1871.
- * James G. Wylie, Sept. 21, 1871.
- * Wm. W. Hemphill, Oct. 19, 1876.
- * Wm. McIntyre, Oct. 19, 1876.
- * Hugh Nisbet, Oct. 19, 1882.
- * Neal McIntyre, Oct. 19, 1882.
- * David R. Stormont, Oct. 19, 1882.

* deceased.

a now in the United Presbyterian Church.

b now in the Presbyterian Church.

Forty-two persons in all have been ruling Elders in Bethel, of whom but seventeen are now living.

Messrs: Edgar J. Munford, A. McMillan, and J. Wilson were elders in South Carolina; Messrs. Little, Taylor, and James and Thos. Blair in Tennessee; Mr. Fulton in Ohio; Dr. Marshall in Hill Prairie; and Mr. M. McMillan in Concord, though the last two were members of Bethel before Hill Prairie and Concord were organized:

BETHEL SYNOD.

This congregation is a part of the original Bethel, and its separate history dates from the division of 1833.

At that time its members chose the new church building, still unfinished, and agreed to pay those in connection with General Synod the amount subscribed by them for building the church. Rev. Daniel Steele of Ohio was the first minister who visited them. In the summer of 1834 he preached here and in Old Bethel and Elkhorn. During his stay he organized a congregation in Elkhorn, in connection with Synod, which obtained Rev. S. McKinney as pastor in 1835. This congregation does not claim connection with Bethel, although Mr. Wylie had labored there and gathered in some members before the division.

Bethel was dependent on supplies for several years. The first effort to obtain a pastor resulted in the choice of Rev. J. B. Johnston on the 17th of September, 1839. The call was declined. On the 27th of January, 1840, a call was made in favor of Mr. Hugh Stevenson. Having accepted the call, he was ordained by the Presbytery of the Lakes, July 13, 1840, and soon after began his labors in Bethel, and was installed pastor on the 15th Oct., 1840. He died, greatly lamented, on the 15th of May, 1846, in the 38th year of his age. During his pastorate 76 persons were received into full communion.

The next pastor was the Rev. James Milligan. He began his labors in March 1848. The congregation still increased in numbers, and during his pastorate the Church Hill congregation in Grand Cote Prairie was organized. He was released from his charge, at his own request, on the 9th of August, 1854.

On the 13th of August, 1855, Mr. D. J. Shaw was called to become pastor, but declined the call.

Mr. D. S. Faris was called on the 26th of March, 1857. He accepted the call and was ordained and installed Oct. 7, 1857. From that time until the present Mr. Faris has continued to discharge faithfully the duties of his office, and his pastorate is now the longest in the whole community.

In 1874 the old church and lot were sold and a new brick church 40x60 feet was built in Sparta, at a cost of over

\$5,000. It was first used for public worship on Sabbath, Feb. 21, 1875, the pastor preaching the opening sermon from John 4: 23. The number of members at present is 94. Among those who have entered the ministry in the Reformed Presbyterian Church from this congregation may be named: A. C. Todd, and T. P. Stevenson, editor of the *Christian Statesman*, published in Philadelphia in the interest of national reform.

The following is the list of officers in the congregation, and the time of entering on office:

RULING ELDERS.

Archibald McMillan,
James Conter,
John Hunter,
Alexander Moore,
Robert Miller, Feb. 6, 1843.
Wm. Boyd, do. do.
Joseph Patton, Oct. 31, 1850.
Matthew Preston, do.
Chas. R. Miller, Sept. 4, 1856.
Alex'r J. Edgar, do. do.
Wm. A. Stevenson, Oct. 14, 1859.
James Finley, April 27, 1865.
R. H. Sinclair, May 7, 1868.
Daniel Dickey,
A. W. Hunter, April 19, 1877.
John E. Wilson, do. do.

DEACONS.

James Preston, Feb. 1841.
Wm. Miller, do.
Alexander McKelvey, do.
Robert Sinclair, Feb. 6, 1843.
Isaac H. Hayes, Sept. 4, 1850.
Charles Preston, do.
C. H. Stormont, October 14, 1859.
R. H. Sinclair, April 27, 1865.
R. J. Miller, April 30, 1877.
John Stuart, do. do.

Present Members of Session are:— Those now serving are:—Isaac H. Rev. D. S. Farris, Pastor; J. Patton, C. Hayes, Charles Preston, C. H. Stormont, R. Miller, D. Dickey, A. W. Hunter and and R. J. Miller.
J. E. Wilson.

OLD BETHEL CONGREGATION.

Old Bethel was organized by act of Presbytery, Nov. 5th, 1831. Twenty-seven families joined in the request for a separate organization, and at the first meeting of Bethel session after this, three other families asked to be certified to the new congregation.

As they opposed the building of the new church, and had with them the first elders of Bethel, they claimed to be the original congregation; and, to make sure their claim, prefixed the term "Old" to the original name "Bethel," and are so known. The records of the congregation for a period of nine years are lost.

In the division of 1833 the congregation, with the exception of a few families, went with the Synod. The congregation received supplies until the settlement of their first pastor, Rev. James Wallace, Nov. 1st, 1840. Before this time, Alexander J. Edgar and James Finley had been added to the session.

The first election for deacons was held January 11, 1841, when John Finley, William Edgar and Robert Weir were chosen and ordained on the 20th of the same month. Archibald Rodgers was added to the session Sept. 26, 1845.

On the 10th of December, 1846, Archibald Hunter and William Weir were ordained to the eldership, and David Ewing was added to the board of deacons. James Mathews and Robert Redpath were chosen deacons Sept. 11th, 1850, and ordained in October following. Thomas Donnelly was chosen ruling elder at the same time. On the 3d of Feb., 1853, J. A. Brown and Robert W. Lyons were invested with the office of deacon, and at the same time James C. Lynn was added to the session. James Mathews was added to the session Feb. 1, 1855, and John Weir, April 15th, 1858. At the latter date, John Lynn and Joseph B. Mathews were added to the board of deacons. On the 5th of May, 1865, Hugh Mathews, John Houston and Wm. J. S. Cathcart were invested with the office of ruling elders.

On the 16th of May, 1867, Mr. Wallace having received an appointment to bring the subject of National Reform before the people of Illinois, asked to be released from his congregation. His request was granted, and the pulpit was declared vacant on the first Sabbath of July following. His pastorate extended over a period of nearly twenty-seven years. After filling his appointment in the interests of National Reform, he continued to labor in the work of the ministry as opportunity offered, until his death, May 1st, 1877.

The first house of worship was built about the time that Mr. Wallace became pastor. It was a frame building, and stood on the hill near Adam Wylie's residence. It was destroyed by fire in 1852. A brick church was built the following year on Plum Creek, more than a mile S. W. of the old site, and the congregation still continues to worship in it.

About the same time a part of the congregation that had been seeking a separate organization for some time, built a frame church on John Lynn's farm, about two miles N. W. of the site of the old church.

Failing to obtain a separate organization, some united with other congregations under care of Synod, and the rest declined the authority of Synod and organized in connection with the Reformed Presbytery.

In April, 1868, a call was made out for Mr. James A. Black, a licentiate of the Pittsburgh Presbytery. It was declined. A year later, a call was made upon Mr. W. J. Gillespie, a licentiate of the same Presbytery. This call was accepted, and Mr. Gillespie was ordained on the 14th of October, 1869. After laboring with much acceptance for a year, he joined the United Presbyterian Church, and became pastor of the congregation in Sparta. In November, 1871, a call was made upon Mr. S. J. Crowe, which was declined. Another call, made October 7, 1872, in favor of Rev. N. M. Johnston, was also declined. In the spring of 1874 a call was made for Rev. P. P. Boyd, of Cedarville, Ohio.

He accepted the call, and was installed pastor July 20, 1874, a relation which he still sustains.

During his pastorate the following members have been added to session—Thos. Finley, Thos. Orr, Louis M. Patterson. Their ordination took place Dec. 4th., 1875. At the same time J. T. Weir, J. H. Marshall and D. J. Reid were ordained deacons.

The congregation is in a flourishing condition, and stronger than at any former period of its history. The present membership is 168. J. McDonald and J. M. Armour entered the ministry from this congregation, and J. M. Finley, licentiate was also brought up in it.

HILL PRAIRIE CONGREGATION.

(Reformed Presbytery). That part of Old Bethel congregation referred to above as seeking a separate organization was known as the Hill Prairie society of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

In August 1857, twenty members of that society petitioned the Reformed Presbytery for an organization. The request was granted and on the 4th of Nov. Rev. David Steele and James Williams, (ruling Elder) committee of Presbytery,

organized a congregation consisting of twenty-three members. Joseph Keys, Wm. R. Lynn and John Tweed were chosen candidates for office of ruling Elder, and ordained on the 12th of the same month, and the first communion was held on the Sabbath following.

In March 1858 a unanimous call was made upon Rev. David Steele to become pastor, the congregation asking for one half of his time. The call was signed by twenty-three members as follows: James Elder, Jenny C. Holmes, Mary Fowlds, Ellen Cathcart, Joseph Lynn, William R. Lynn, Nancy Lynn, Joseph Keys, Ellis Keys, John Cathcart, Mary Cathcart, Hugh Tweed, Jennet Tweed, Jane Cuthbertson, David Tweed, Amelia J. Tweed, James E. Wilson, Ann Wilson, John J. Marshall, Elizaeth Marshall, John Tweed, Nancy Tweed and Robert J. Ritchie.

Mr. Steele began his labors in June 1858, and continued to do the work of a pastor among them about eight years, though he was never formally installed pastor over the congregation. At the end of that time he removed to Philadelphia having accepted a call from the congregation in that city.

On the 17th of October 1861, M. H. Lynn M. D., was added to the session. In May 1863, the congregation had increased so that the communicants numbered forty-five.

Session having become disorganized by the death of all its members, except John Tweed, on the 27th of May 1867, J. H. Marshall and Hugh Tweed were chosen candidates for the Eldership. On the 6th of June following, Mr. Marshall was ordained, Mr. Tweed having declined to serve. The membership at this time was 35—The congregation afterward decreased but there is still a remnant which is supplied from time to time by the Presbytery.

GRAND COTE R. P. CHURCH.

Grand Cote was the fourth congregation formed from Bethel in connection with General Synod after the division of 1833. At the fall meeting of the Western Presbytery in 1849, Bethel session was authorized to organize a congregation in Grand Cote Prairie if the way should be open. This decree was carried into effect on the 8th of Feb. 1850, at the house of James Robb; James Robb and A. R. McKelvey were chosen ruling Elders and their ordination took place on the first Thursday of March in the Bethel church in Eden. The congregation consisted of sixty members and took its name from the paririe in which it was located. The site chosen for the church was within the limits of the present town of Coulterville. The first building was a frame 40 x 50, erected in 1851 though not finished for some years afterwards.

Starting under such favorable circumstances they soon sought to obtain a pastor, and on the 15th of August 1850 in connection with Salem made a call upon Mr. James Pearson. This call was declined. Another call was made soon after in connection with Unity, in favor Mr. G. R. McMillan, but was also declined.

Mr. Pearson having been released from his charges in Washington congregation was again called by the Grand Cote congregation in connection with Unity in the spring of 1853. Having accepted the call he was installed on the 18th

of August following and continued to labor with success until laid aside by disease which terminated in his death on the 28th of March, 1856.

In the spring of 1857 a call was made upon Mr. Matthew McBride, but it was not accepted.

The next effort to secure a pastor resulted in the choice of Mr. Wm. S. Bratton on the 24th of October 1859. He accepted and was ordained and installed over the congregation on the 15th of Dec. following. He labored diligently, even beyond his strength, publicly and from house to house, for nearly eleven years. The congregation increased to such an extent that it became necessary to enlarge the house of worship.

In August 1870, along with most of the ministers of the Western Presbytery, Mr. Bratton withdrew from the Reformed and joined the United Presbyterian Church. About one third of the congregation went with him, and he continued to preach to them until his death Jan. 11th, 1873. The congregation was again dependent on supplies.

In the fall of 1871, the old church was taken down and a new frame building 40 x 60 erected on the same site. On the 16th of April 1872 a call was made upon Mr. W. J. Smiley to become their pastor. This call was never presented inasmuch as the candidate has already accepted a call from the Bethel.

On the 22nd of July 1873 a unanimous call was made upon Mr. Robert Hunter, to become then pastor. This call was accepted and the pastor elect, after completing his course in the Seminary began his labors in March following and was ordained and installed on the 15th of May 1874. He labored successfully here for a period of seven years when on account of the failing health of his wife he was compelled to seek a change of climate. He offered his resignation of his charge which was accepted, the release going into effect on the 15th of May 1881.

The session at its first meeting consisted of three members, viz: James Wilson, James Robb, and A. R. McKelvey. The first named was an elder in Bethel, and belonged to that part of the congregation set off to form the new organization. David Munford also an elder in Bethel was chosen an elder in Grand Cote Jan. 20th, 1852. Robert Mathews one of the original members of Hill Prairie session was chosen to that office here on the 30th of Oct., 1852. Sam'l Douglas, James R. McKelvey and Wm. Munford were added to the session June 20th, 1859.

James W. McMillan, Robert James, and Wm. J. Mathews were likewise added April 30th, 1863. Wm. W. Jamison declined serving.

Session having been reduced by the death of some of its members and the removal of others from the congregation, was increased April 4th, 1873 by the installation of James Kemps and Jno. Boyle, who had been ordained to the eldership in the Unity congregation at the time of its organization a few years before, and the ordination of James Walker. James H. Carlisle, Charles R. McKelvey and Matthew S. McMillan were chosen at the same time but declined.

The last addition to the session was made Oct. 26th, 1876 when Jno. C. McKelvey and M. S. McMillan were ordained

and installed Elders. James S. Kell, formerly an elder in Princeton congregation, chosen at this time, declined serving. The members now are James Robb, Robert Mathews, Wm. J. Mathews, James Kemps, Jno. Boyle, James Walker, Jno. C. McKelvey and Matthew S. McMillan.

On the 13th of September 1882, a call was made upon Mr. James B. McCool, a licentiate of the Philadelphia Presbytery to become pastor; which has since been declined.

In March 1868 a congregation consisting of thirty-seven members was organized in Elkhorn Prairie Washington Co. it took the name Unity and was recognized as a branch of Grand Cote congregation and enjoyed a share of the pastors labors for a time. In 1870 most of the members went into the United Presbyterian Church and the organization became the basis of the Oakdale U. P. Congregation.

About six hundred and fifty members in all have been connected with the Grand Cote congregation. The present membership is about two hundred.

CHURCH HILL CONGREGATION.

This congregation was organized on the 17th of July, 1854, by a committee of the Illinois Presbytery. It was originally a part of the Bethel congregation Eden. Fifty-nine members were received from that congregation, and enrolled as members of the new organization.

Alexander Moore, Sr., J. G. Miller and John Robinson, were elected Ruling Elders, and Samuel Elliott and Wm. Woodside, Deacons.

A church building had been erected some time previous to the organization on what was familiarly called "the mound" in Grand Cote prairie, the present site of the village of Coulterville, named in honor of its founder James Coulter, the oldest resident of the prairie.

The congregation was able from the first to support the regular ordinances. Accordingly the moderation of a call was granted them and on the 6th of November 1854, Rev. James Milligan (who had resigned the charge of Bethel congregation) was chosen pastor. This call was never presented, but Mr. Milligan was continued stated supply for a considerable time.

On October 26, 1857, a call was made on Rev. H. P. McClurken. This call was presented and declined.

Another call made October 28, 1859, on Rev. A. C. Todd, was also declined. On the 14th of November, 1859, a call was made on Rev. W. F. George, which was accepted, and his installation took place on the 5th of March, 1860.

June 21, 1858, Samuel Woodside and M. K. Mawhinney were ordained elders, and Thompson Moore and Andrew Thompson, deacons.

October 18, 1860, D. H. Coulter and Alexander Moore were added to the session; also, Wm. Woodside and W. B. Whittaker on the 16th of October, 1863.

April 15th, 1864, Willson Moore and Alexander Campbell were made deacons.

Another election January 9, 1867, resulted in the choice of Willson Moore and David Mearns, as elders, and on the 28th of February following, they were ordained and installed.

At the same time, W. McKelvey, J. O. Mawhinney and Robt. Cathcart were invested with the office of deacon.

Rev. W. F. George, after laboring faithfully in the congregation eleven years, was, at his own request, released from his charge on the 3d of May, 1871.

In December following, a call was moderated in favor of Mr. S. J. Crowe, but it was not accepted.

On February 11, 1873, a call was made out in favor of Rev. J. M. Faris, which was accepted, and on June 19, 1872 he was installed pastor by a commission of presbytery.

February 4, 1875, J. D. Elder, R. S. Edgar, J. M. Wylie, R. K. Wiseley were added to the session.

On the 15th of March of the same year, R. R. McKelvey, R. B. Elliott, W. J. Crawford and J. J. Torrens were added to the board of deacons. M. H. McKelvey and J. W. Preston were also invested with the office of deacon on the 14th of November, 1881.

The records show the names of 312 persons enrolled as members since the organization of the congregation. The number now in full communion is 134.

The present house of worship was built in 1873. It is of brick, 40x65 ft and costs \$5,000, and was first occupied on the 1st of March, 1874.

The present officers of the congregation are Rev. J. M. Faris, pastor; J. G. Miller, Wm. Woodside, Samuel Woodside, J. D. Elder, R. S. Edgar and R. K. Wiseley, ruling elders; and Samuel Elliott, R. B. Elliott, W. J. Crawford, M. H. McKelvey and James Preston, deacons.

D. H. Coulter formerly an elder is now in the ministry.

While the influence of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in this community is not as extensive as formerly, being now shared by other churches, yet we may truly say that the reputation which the community enjoys for intelligence and morality, is in large measure due to the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Her influence for liberty has been felt, and while her testimony against slavery, lifted up at the close of the last century, (since the year 1800 no slaveholder was retained in her communion) has been vindicated, she still pleads for the recognition of the rights of Christ as "Head over all things to the church."

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH.

BY REV. FR. ERDMANN.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the church named after the great Reformer, Dr. Martin Luther. She receives the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the infallible revealed Word of God, and adheres to "Book of Concord," from the year 1580, as her Confession. The "Book of Concord" consists, 1. Of the three Ecumenical Creeds; 2. The Augsburg Confession from 1530; 3. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession; 4. The Schmalcaldian Articles; 5. Luther's Smaller and Larger Catechisms; 6. The Formula of Concord.

The Lutheran Church was transplanted to this country mainly by German and Scandinavian immigrants, and dates back as far as when New York was yet a Dutch colony.