

Copeland Christian Church Organized, 1866

FIRST SERMON PREACHED IN COPELAND SCHOOL HOUSE

First Church Erected In Fall And Dedicated, 1867

Here is a reprint of what was a souvenir pamphlet of the history of the Copeland Christian Church that was printed about 1918.

Dedicated to the memory of Rev. John England, Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Harbert, Mr. and Mrs. David Birks, Mr. and Mrs. John Birks, Mr. and Mrs. William Copeland, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Birks, Mr. and Mrs. Abner Copeland, Polly Peters, George Whitesides, Maria Copeland.

In the year 1853 on the 11th of December in a log school house standing about one-half mile east of the present church was preached the first sermon by a Christian minister in this locality. The minister being Rev. John Wilson of Mechanicsburg, Illinois. In April 1854, Rev. Long preached at the same place.

In the years 1855 and 1856, Rev. John England was a frequent preacher at the new Copeland school house and on the authority of the charter members of the Copeland church, we must give Rev. John England the honor of being the founder of this congregation and by his efforts the church was organized at the Copeland school house Aug. 11, 1866.

The first officers were: Abner Copeland and William Copeland, Elders.

Deacons: George Whitesides and David Birks.

Clerk: Samuel Harbert.

The charter members were: Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Harbert, Mr. and Mrs. David Birks, Mr. and Mrs. John Birks, Mr. and Mrs. William Copeland, Mr. and Mrs. Roland Birks, Mr. and Mrs. Abner Copeland, Polly Peters, George Whiteside and Marie Copeland. Of these all except four have gone to their reward—leaving a lasting heritage from their labors to this community.

First Church Erected

The Copeland Church (house) was erected in the autumn of 1867 on the present church grounds, donated for that purpose by John D. Copeland and wife.

The church was dedicated in December 1867, by Rev. John England, who was greatly loved by all. It was thought by some at that time to get a noted dedicatory for the occasion, but nearly all who had subscribed said, "If Uncle Johnnie don't dedicate we don't pay our subscription." It is unnecessary to say "Uncle Johnnie dedicated to the satisfaction and pleasure of all".

The first basket meeting was held July 5, 1866 in John Copeland's grove. This became an annual event and has been perpetuated as such.

In the fall of 1906 an addition was built on the house and in the year 1910 the building was greatly enlarged and modernized and was rededicated June 25, 1911 by Rev. Gilbert Jones and Rev. M. M. Hughes. On this date was held also the annual basket meeting which was largely attended.

The fourth Lord's day in June has been set as the annual basket meeting day and brings together many old friends in social fellowship which is greatly enjoyed by all.

The present church official boards are as follow:

ELDERS—
Elmer Turley, Calvin Payne
Charles Bowers, William Follis,
John Clendenen.

DEACONS—
George Bowers, Fred Bellatti,
George Gulso, Frank Turley,
Elmer Edwards, Clarence Bowers,
Robert Jones, Frank Copeland,
William Simpson, George Wilham.

TRUSTEES—
Eli Harbart, George Edwards,

Alfred Scroggin.

CHURCH CLERK—

J. H. Clendenen.

BIBLE SCHOOL—

Supt., Elmer Turley; Ass't.
Supt., George Gulso; Sec'y.,
Macy Drabing; Treas., E. E.
Edwards.

LADIES' AID—

Pres., Correll Bowers; Vice-
Pres., Laura Copeland; Sec'y.,
Frances Bowers, Treas., Laura
Payne.

C.W.B.M.—

Pres., Marie Bowers; Vice-Pres.,
Sallie Follis; Sec'y., Laura
Payne; Treas., Mary Clendenen.

Regular church services on 2nd
and 4th Lord's Day of each month.
Mrs. Jessie Monser, of Decatur,
Ill., is now Pastor.

The Bible School is largely attended
and is dated one of the best in the county.

Through the Lord's Day school
the greater results of the church
work is attained, nearly all additions
to the church came thru the
Sunday School. A teacher
training class was recently completed,
taught by Mrs. W. E. Simpson,
which has been of untold benefit to the school.

The Ladies' Aid has been one
of the greatest helps in financial
matters giving to various beneficiaries
and have recently given much to the Red Cross.

The C.W.B.M. Auxiliary has
just recently been organized and
will doubtless fill its mission along
with other activities of Copeland Church.

Regular services have been held
at Copeland Church since 1870, with the exception of short periods when some of the old guards moved out and until new recruits fell in line. The policy now is to fill up all gaps when made and to keep on the firing line at all times. The history of Copeland Church records no serious difficulties, but has been rather placid, yet vigorous in upholding the banner of Jesus Christ.

J. H. Clendenen, C.C.

Past 50 Years Recalled By Mrs. Ellis Quandt

During the years previous to Television, Radio, Family Bowling, P.T.A., and other social activities and clubs, the Copeland Church House was more or less the community center, where people met for Box Suppers, Ice Cream Socials and the like.

The Box Social was something to which the people looked forward with great anticipation. As the girls trimmed their boxes in ruffled crepe paper, decorated with ropes of fluffy twinkling tinsel, their hearts pounded with the thrill — "who will buy my box? Will it be the boy I like, or, someone's hired man that I don't even know?"

The Box Socials were well attended. In the lamp-lighted building a lively auctioneer took the bids of the men — young, old, joking and laughing. Then were cakes and pies sold also, and one time a cotton pie was prepared and sold to a "pie-lover," who, when he couldn't cut his cotton pie, reached over with his pocket knife to whack out a big slice of cake from his neighbor's who had just paid good money for it, saying — "I always like pie, but if I can't have pie, then I'll take cake."

Then there were the annual Ice Cream suppers. Ice cream was a rare treat! Lighted lanterns were hung on the tree trunks and on stretched wire. Ladies brought homemade cakes — no cake mixes then — the men rolled lemons for the lemonade made in large stone jars. Tables were set up under a starry June sky, the girls flitted

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JOHN D. ENGLAND ORGANIZER OF COPELAND CHURCH

Among the early preachers of the gospel, traveling over many miles to serve in a number of congregations was John D. England. He preached in Logan county and no doubt in many other areas.

He was a man highly respected and deeply loved by all who knew him, and was the one to whom we give the credit for having organized the Copeland Christian Church (Pleasant Grove) in 1866, Aug. 11, in the Copeland school house.

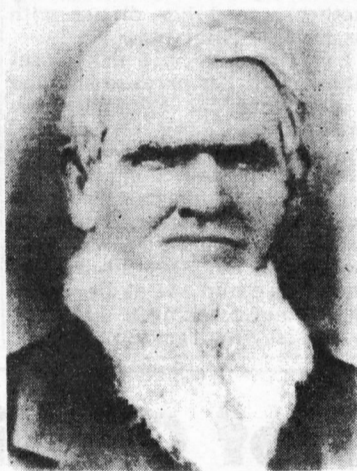
The first Church building was erected the following year, some of the congregation thought to have a new, unknown preacher to dedicate the building, but others said, "no! if you don't get Uncle Johnnie to do the dedicating, we don't pay our subscription." So, Uncle Johnnie dedicated Dec. 11, 1867.

Following is a brief account of Uncle Johnnie's birth and death found in an old scrapbook:

"John D. England was born in Kentucky on Jan. 15, 1811, moved with his parents to Sangamon Co. in 1817 and to Logan Co. in 1839, having united with the Christian Church in 1832 at the age of 21.

From that time on he was one of God's faithful ministers.

His early library was composed of the Bible and a few school books, but what he lacked in education he made up by his



REV. JOHN D. ENGLAND

charities and wholeness of heart toward his fellow creatures. Upright and conscientious; just and kind, he won the hearts of all who knew him.

The date of his death is unknown to the writer, but it came about by accident. At Cornland, Ill. Mr. England attempted to alight from a moving train. He fell, and was seriously injured. He was carried to the home of the station agent, G. K. Greening, where he passed away.

The funeral was held at the Mt. Pulaski Christian Church with the whole town turning out to honor this great and good man.

"Uncle Johnnie" England is dead, but the good deeds of his life are immortal."



REMINISCENT OF OLDEN CHURCH DAYS BY MARY CLENDENEN

Her Story Relating To Country School Written In 1922

On Sunday, Sept. 22, 1946, a potluck dinner was given at the Copeland Christian Church, 6 miles southwest of Mount Pulaski, honoring the returned servicemen of the community. At this time was read reminiscences of the church, which were written 25 years ago by Mrs. Mary Clendenen, who was 7 years old when the Copeland Church building was erected. At the time of her death, July 31, 1945, she had been a member of the congregation for almost 60 years. The historical article follows:

"The Church in the Wildwood"

As I first remember Copeland Church it was surrounded by heavy timber, except on the south side, where the prairie extended away into the distance. A public highway came from the south but stopped at the south side of the church grounds, and from there a by-road wended past the church, down through the woods, and across the lake, past the home of my father, (the late L. D. Scroggin), and finally intersected with the public highway at what is now the Bo-Jac Farm.

The church yard was enclosed by a board fence with a rail board on top, making a fine place for the boys to sit and watch the people unload on the big stile which was a huge platform extending from the church doors to the yard fence. Here the men drove up in lumber wagons; some few "upper-tens" in spring wagons. Some of the older style of men allowed their wives and children to clamber out as best they could, while others more "up to date" would step out on the stile, and assist his family to alight.

The young men and women came on horseback. I think I

have noticed as many as 25 young people going from church on the south lane. If one should see so many on horseback now-a-days, they would think the cavalry had been called out. Almost every sapling near the church had a horse or team of horses hitched to it during services.

My home being on the north side of the lake I sometimes found it quite a problem to get to services for as some of you know, the lake was at that time yet undredged, and was a regular swamp full of mud, water, trees, underbrush, wild grass and cattails. In high water season it was hardly navigable. It sometimes reminded me of the story of the rich man and Lazarus — a great gulf fixed between myself and the church. But I usually got there somehow; sometimes in a lumber wagon, sometimes in a spring wagon; on horseback or in a canoe. At other times, when nature would bridge it, I, with a crowd of others would walk across on the ice, some of the boys using their skates as propellers.

And sometimes it would be like the Israelites at the Red Sea; we would cross over on dry land, but happy to say old Pharaoh wasn't in pursuit.

Just a few hundred yards south east of the church stood William Copeland's barn, and across the little ravine, which is still there, I see the little cottage in which lived William, with Jane, his good wife, and Rosetta, his only daughter, and Fred Barley, his adopted son. I almost hear the clank of the chain on the big gate as they open it on their way to church.

Uncle Miller and Aunt Betsy Ann Copeland, as they were familiarly known lived where Otto Henrichsmeyer now lives. I hear them inviting the minister and all other people from a distance,

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Present Enlarged Structure Serves Growing Congregation

