

### HISTORY OF CENTRE HALL. ITS PEOPLE AND CHURCHES

From Isabelle Murray of Lemont comes a forty-year-old copy of The Centre Hall Reporter containing some interesting history of Centre Hall and its buildings and churches, written by the late J. D. Murray. For many years Mr. Murray conducted the town's only drug store, now owned by Mabel Arney, who acquired it after the death of Mr. Murray. The article compiled by Mr. Murray and published in 1901, follows:

Mr. Rothruft was now fully installed pastor of the Centre Hall Lutheran church, which had just been reconstructed. The Bellefonte congregation was taken from this charge in 1832, at which time there was no church here of any kind. Rev. P. S. Fisher, the Reformed minister, who lived in Boalsburg preached in the Loop, now called Tusseyville, in the union church. It was customary at that time for all church people of Reformed belief in this section to attend services in the Loop church. The same is true of the Lutherans of that day. Each denomination had their day for services. Half of the preaching by both Reformed and Lutheran ministers was in the German language or rather Pennsylvania Dutch. This would seem very strange today, but at that time there were many Dutch people living in the neighborhood, which made preaching necessary in that language.

It is surprising how very rapidly this Dutch run out once it began to decline in popularity. It disappeared so rapidly that in some instances it divided families. The writer has knowledge of several families where two or three of the first born children were pretty well grown up before they pretended to speak a word of English, and the younger children, or second crop, as the parents saw fit to call them, never learned to talk in that dialect. When the writer came among these people in 1851, he found them to be an honest, hardworking, frugal and prosperous people; much inclined to hospitality and religion. The proof of this can be seen by the number of fine churches that have been erected in this place at a great expense. In addition to these present churches, three other churches have been built—one Reformed and two Lutheran. The Lutherans during 1862 and 1863 built their first church on the lot now owned by the McDennahan family, on Church street. The structure stood well back in the lot. The foundation proved faulty—sandy and soft, and soon the brick walls began to crack near the roof. The building was then pronounced unsafe, and the people grew afraid to meet in it.

About 1873, the first Lutheran church was constructed and the available material used in the construction of a larger and finer edifice across the street to the rear of the bank building on the site now occupied by the dwelling house of Miller Goodhart. The dedication took place, November 18, 1873. This

church only stood a short time. October 13, 1884, the church took fire and was totally destroyed from the burning of two stables nearby. June 20, 1886, the present Lutheran church was dedicated.

When the year 1894 came around the Reformed people, with perhaps a little more pride than piety, conceived the idea that their church was in a tumble-down condition. The old structure was accordingly razed and the very pretty brown stone church, dedicated Nov. 29, 1896, is the result.

It is fifty-five years since this town was started, and today there are five very good churches standing, and three were rebuilt—an average of one in less than every seventh year.

An old gentleman from New York, who used to visit this place frequently remarked that he could see no more thrifty enterprise going on in Centre Hall than church building. Well, remarked one, it is all right to build churches, even if the men and women get a little too enthusiastic and get to believe that a great effort on their part to bring the job to completion and liquidate the debt will cover a multitude of sins. A lady of our acquaintance was much attached to a large pet dog possessed of a vindictive spirit—a persistent fighter. He would fight at home and go away to punish some poor cur. One night when Major for that was the dog's name, came home from a fighting expedition on three legs his mistress exclaimed: "Major, you didn't get that by building churches." The lady honestly thought that if it were possible for her dog to have been engaged in the meritorious work of helping to build churches, he would be standing on four legs in place of three. Now this lady evidently looked upon church building as a righteous act and a shield from danger.

Going back to the early history in church building in Centre Hall, let me say that in 1851 and 1852 the Reformed and Lutherans who lived on the north side of Penna Valley began to contemplate the erection of a place of worship, as all were tiring of going to the Loop to church. Mr. Wilmer was at that time the bone and sinew of the town as well as of the Reformed church. Mr. Wilmer was well prepared to go five miles every Sunday. He was a great horse fancier; he had a pair of carriage horses, also a very fine saddle horse, called Perry; he was almost as fleet as an antelope.

The writer at that time was a boy, but he soon learned the rule in the Wilmer family was to go over to the Loop five miles to the union church to hear Rev. Fisher or Rev. Rothruft preach either Dutch or English. Neither of them could speak anything like good English, but were every good German scholars. At times it was difficult to know which language they were using. The principal part of the hearers were hardworking people, and on a warm day after driving from one to five miles they could sleep no matter how the preaching was done. One member accused another of sleeping all the time. Oh, well, he replied, I feel our preacher will make it all right; I don't need to stay awake to watch him.

At this time the Reformed people were the strongest, both numerically and financially, on this side the valley, and when it came to building a church the most difficult question that arose was to decide whether to build a Reformed, a Lutheran or a union church. Rev. Fisher claimed it would not be best to build a union church and have it dedicated as such. He proposed to have it built a Reformed church and not a union church. But as he was feeling very kindly towards the Lutheran brethren he wanted them to be accommodated to them, yet he was opposed to a union, or as he called it, a comma sheitlich a Kerlich. It was finally settled to build it a Reformed church, be dedicated as such and owned by that congregation. But how were the Lutherans to be treated? A subscription was circulated among the members of both churches for the purpose of building a \$3000 church, and each member subscribed as much as they felt able to pay. It was counted that the Reformed people would subscribe largely in excess of the Lutherans, but there was then an agreement made between the two congregations so that each congregation would enjoy all the rights and privileges of the other as far as the use of the church was concerned. In summing up it was found the Lutherans had paid about one-third of the cost of the structure. It was then agreed that the Lutherans should pay a rental of \$8.00 a year and one-half the sexton's fee, each one to find their own light and fuel. Things turned out just as Rev. Fisher predicted after they had a place to worship both congregations increased and later Lutherans built their own church as stated above. So far as the writer knows there was never any trouble between these congregations.

Shortly after the writer made his appearance among these good people they called him the Irishman or that Irishman, because he could not speak the Pennsylvania Dutch. The appellation was accepted without a murmur. One lady remarked, well, he is Irish; I knew his mother and his two sisters; the mother can't speak a half dozen words until you can notice the Irish brogue, and besides he was born and raised in an Irish settlement. There was no use denying his nationality with this array of evidence—circumstantial, prima-facie and direct—against him. The young Hibernian concluded that the best thing to do was to acquaint himself with the Pennsylvania Dutch, and thus become more like the people of the plains. When the writer thought he had mastered the language fairly well he was humiliated to hear a lady remark that she liked to hear him talk because it sounded so funny. They seemed to be a little prejudice against the Irish and their descendants. When any thing was done that did not show skill or good workmanship, the Dutch said it was Irish; when a horse showed the marks of a poor groom, that was Irish; a farmer who

kept his fences in poor repair was designated as Irish farmer. When a woman was found to be a little negligent in her domestic affairs, talk English and read something outside of the Reformed Messenger or the Lutheran Observer, she was a Yankee. There was, however, no real animosity existed between the Irish and the Dutch, the expression was only used to show disapproval of methods, etc.

When the writer came to Centre Hall he found the young people courting in Dutch, getting married in Dutch, and living happily together in Dutch. There was soon a great effort made on the part of the young people to learn to speak English plainly. Parents avoided speaking Dutch within the hearing of their children. The schools were English and Dutch talk among school children soon disappeared. It was not many years until the younger generation began to find fault with the two old preachers—Rothruft and Fisher. Old Mr. Fisher was a very long headed man, and saw the signs of the time very well, which meant that he must get out of the charge. He wisely concluded that the most opportune time to leave would be during the discussion incident to the building of the church just cited.

### COLLEGE TWP.

Mr. and Mrs. Orlando Brion and children Jack, Tommy, Bobby and Nancy Lou from Williamsport, were guests on Sunday of Mr. and Mrs. John Lee.

Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Spicer and children Rena Claire, Betty, Freda Wilbur II, Roy Bradley and Glenn were guests on Sunday at the home of his aunt, Miss Alice Walker and uncle William Walker at Tyrone.

Mr. and Mrs. John H. Shuey, Mrs. George Shuey and Mrs. Sarah Osman were shoppers in Millheim on Thursday.

Mrs. Christ Houtz and daughter-in-law Mrs. Paul Houtz were guests of Mrs. Robert Bailey on Wednesday.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph T. Hassinger and children Betty Jane, Harry, Anna, Tommy and Dickey had a picnic supper at Miller's Grove on Sunday evening. This represents their last supper outing for the 1941 season.

Mr. and Mrs. George W. Spicer and family, Alice, Ethel, Arthur, of the Oddie and friend Glenn Glasgow spent Sunday afternoon with Mrs. Spicer's sister, Miss Alice Walker at Tyrone.

Mrs. John Lee was the guest of Mrs. Jane Stambaugh on Thursday.

Mrs. William H. Houtz visited on Wednesday with Mrs. Agnes Mayes.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Shearer had as their dinner guest on Sunday, Mrs. Shearer's foster brother and sister-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur P. Gill and children, Minnie, Pearl, Woodward. Afternoon visitors were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wilmer and Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Spicer and family.

Mrs. Frank Wasson visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Shuey on Thursday.

A number of friends helped W. L. Spicer celebrate his birthday anniversary on Saturday evening. Those present were: Mr. and Mrs. George W. Spicer, Alice and Ethel, Odie, Raymond and Arthur, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Weis, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd W. Spicer and son Jimmie, Mr. and Mrs. Grover Rockey and daughters Joan and Alice. Refreshments were served.

Master C. Glenn Spicer had his fifth birthday anniversary on Sunday the 21, the chief attraction for him was a fine birthday cake baked by his sister Miss Rena Claire.

### MOSHANNON

There were 50 present at the Methodist Sunday School Sunday, Sept. 21st.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles McConnell and family of Larryville, visited relatives here Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Craft, of Wakefield, Quebec, Canada, visited Mr. Craft's mother, Mrs. Cordelia Craft, several days the past week.

Mr. and Mrs. Adolphus Smith and Mr. and Mrs. Rev. Beadwell and children, Bonnie and Connie of Clearfield, spent Sunday at the Charles Guenet home.

Mrs. Catherine Lucas, who spent several weeks with relatives in Renovo and North Bend, has returned to her home here.

The new Free Methodist preacher, Rev. John McCoy, wife and two daughters, arrived here Saturday night from Tidouise, Warren county, and preached on Sunday night.

Miss Patsy Rose, of Karthaus spent last Wednesday afternoon with her friend Hope Lewis.

On Sunday afternoon Mrs. A. J. Hazel, daughter Jane, and her friend, Mr. James Horner, of Boalsburg, and Miss Ida Janet, of Julian, visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Lewis.

Mrs. William Daughenbaugh, Mrs. Alfred Smith and daughter Helen and Mrs. Earl Donley, of Meadville, spent last Thursday at the home of Mrs. John Cartwright.

Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Lewis, daughter, Hope, and Mr. and Mrs. John P. Lucas motored to Coalport Sunday and visited with Mrs. Amelia Benn, who is 80 years old.

The C. B. C. class of the Methodist Sunday School, met last Tuesday evening at the home of Mrs. Glen Fye to help celebrate her birthday.

Mr. James Beals motored to Brislin on Monday afternoon to attend the funeral of a relative. He was accompanied by Hope Lewis, driver of the car, and her mother who visited at the Morris home.

### ROMOLA

There were 66 present at Sunday school Sunday morning.

Saturday, September 27, has been set aside to work on the church. Anyone's help will be very much appreciated.

Thursday evening, October 2, Harvest Home services will be held at our church.

October 5th will be Rally Day. Everybody come and bring your neighbors and friends. Our goal is 125.

### ORVISTON

The Loyal Daughters class held their regular monthly meeting in the social rooms of the church on Monday evening. After the business meeting a wicker roast and ice cream and cake were served.

Rev. and Mrs. Walter Merrick of Vandergrift, spent several days the past week at the Sherman Confer home and visiting friends.

William Haines of Howard, spent Thursday night at the Paul Lomison home.

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Chatman of Howard, spent Thursday night at the Earl Lomison home.

Mr. and Mrs. John Daley of Baltimore, Md. spent the weekend with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clair Butler and Mrs. Blanche Daley.

Mr. and Mrs. George Shady of Monument, spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Walter Butler.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hunter of State College, spent the weekend with Mr. and Mrs. William Barnhart.

Verna Shank of Tyrone, spent the weekend with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Shank.

Mrs. Beulah Condo, who is going to school at Williamsport, spent the weekend at her home.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Heverly of Lock Haven, visited on Wednesday afternoon with Mrs. Bertha Condo.

Mrs. William Gillespie is keeping house for her brother, Joseph Confer at Milesburg, for several days while Mrs. Confer is in the hospital.

Caroline Confer of Beech Creek, spent the weekend with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Confer.

Mrs. Stanley Confer had her tonsils removed at the Lock Haven Hospital on Friday.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Confer are the parents of a son born at the Lock Haven Hospital on Monday.

Vern Spencer, of DuBois, and Verna Belle Young of Monument, spent Thursday evening at the Clair Butler home.

### PORT MATILDA

B. D. I.

Mr. Arthur Kerin, Mrs. Austin Kerin and granddaughter Joan May, Mrs. Julia Tubridy and Mrs. Kate O'Conner of Moshannon spent Sunday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. M. A. Kerin. Other Sunday guests were Joe Duffley of Osceola Mills, Mark J. and Marie Schell of Tyrone.

Mrs. Sue Shasick has been on the sick list for some weeks.

Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester Walk and family spent Sunday at Osceola Mills.

Miss Frances Lewis, who has been on the sick list for some time, is improved at this writing.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Williams of Washington, D. C., spent the weekend with the latter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. M. A. Kerin.

Sunday visitors at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sherman Nearhoof were Mrs. Lennie Burke and Mr. and Mrs. David Horzone and son, of Tyrone, also Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Diehl of Portage.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Brightbill of Altoona, visited his son of this place.

Mrs. E. R. Beckwith and children spent Sunday with her mother Mrs. Dora Woomer of Vail.

Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Shively and family spent Saturday in Tyrone.

Mrs. Richard Fink is on the sick list at this writing.

Mrs. Elizabeth Dixon, who has been sick for some time, is now able to be around again.

The Port Matilda High School Band played at Hecla Park on Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Chester Thompson are rejoicing over the arrival of another little daughter. Mother and family are getting along fine.

Miss Pearl Harshbarger spent Sunday with her mother Mrs. Elizabeth Harshbarger.

Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Harshbarger of Stormstown, spent Sunday with the latter's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Orlando Walk.

Mr. and Mrs. George Carnes spent Saturday in Tyrone.

### MARTHA FURNACE

The Women's Society of Christian Service of the Methodist church met at the home of Mrs. Charlotte Wellers last Friday evening, with the following members present: Mrs. Erma Steele, Mrs. Martha Williams, Mrs. Belle Bailey, Mrs. Ethel Richards, Misses Helen and Lois Steele, Mrs. Gladys Spackman, and Mrs. Nannie Gingery.

A chicken and waffle supper will be held in the Methodist church basement Friday evening, October 10th, from 5 to 8 p. m.

Mr. and Mrs. Merrill Alexander and son Jack of Tyrone, spent Sunday at the N. R. Stover home.

Mr. and Mrs. Merrill Hoover and daughter Lois of Altoona, visited Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Gensamer.

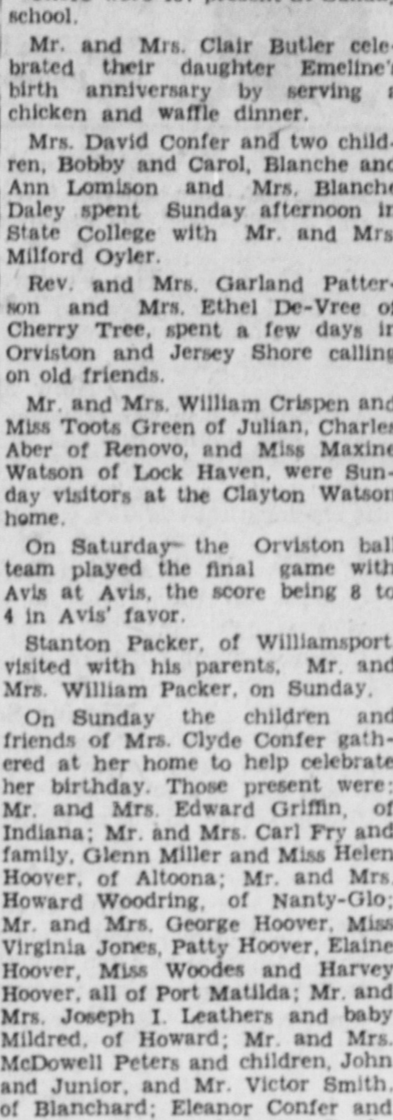
Mr. and Mrs. Willard Williams and Dewey Williams visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Maurer last Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. B. D. Ross of Tyrone, spent Sunday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Spackman.

There will be a Halloween party in the Methodist church basement, Thursday evening, October 30.

A very pleasant home coming was enjoyed by the family of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Williams, on September 21. The occasion was in honor of Mr. Williams' birthday. Mr. Williams has lived a useful, busy life. He has not only lived the allotted time of man, but Sunday marked the passing of his four and one-fourth score years, although he has been in poor health for some time in the affairs of the community and country, his mind is as keen and active as a young man. All of his children were home and all but two of the grand children and three great grandchildren. A bountiful dinner was served and enjoyed by all. Those present besides Mr. and Mrs. Williams were: Blaine Williams and wife, Joseph Acton and wife and daughter, Mildred, Prof. Roy Morrison and wife and daughters, Marjorie and Patsy, Dr. Heaton and wife, B. C. Erhard, Rev. Clark and Mr. Ken Brislin and daughters all of Philadelphia; Mr. and Mrs. J. Marts of Altoona; Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Williams and daughters Helen, Joan, and Jane of Barnesboro; Mr. and Mrs. Foster Klett and sons Harold, Stanley and Donnie, Mr. S. Woomer all of Akron and Miss Elean-

### THE NEW 1942 STUDEBAKER CHAMPION



Here is Studebaker's entry in the lowest price field for 1942—the Champion Custom Club Sedan for six passengers. The new Champion, featuring advanced streamline styling by Raymond Lowry, maintains the operating economy established by its title winning predecessors. The Studebaker Champion is available in Custom and Deluxe two-door and four-door sedans as well as a coupe for three passengers and the Double Date: come for five.

TURBO-MATIC DRIVE IS FEATURE OF STUDEBAKER

The new Studebaker automobiles for 1942 arrived here yesterday. Motorists who have been appreciative over the quality and appearance of the automobiles that will be manufactured under the stress of national defense activities will have their fears dispelled if they go to the showrooms of the Torsell and Spencer Motor Co., located at Allegheny Street and Cherry Alley, Bellefonte and inspect the new Studebakers. The new cars are just as beautiful and brilliant in color and design as any of their predecessors and, according to reports they are better automobiles mechanically than previous models.

Turning from matters of appearance, the observers will find mechanical improvements, most interesting of which is the new "Turbo-matic" drive, which eliminates the clutch pedal and gives the motorist an entirely new thrill in motor car operation.

The new drive is a simple, comprehensive blending of three vital factors, a fluid coupling, controlled gear selection and overdrive transmission. It is another Studebaker "mechanical brain" that brings a new pleasure to driving, a reduction in manual operation.

Practically, the operator of this drive with the engine idling, will put the gear selector lever, located on the steering column, into the "range" he desires, will depress the accelerator and be off. If the going is muddy or sandy, he will use "low," if it is city traffic he will use "traffic range," if it is the open road, he will use "cruising range" is high, but it, too, has overdrive for speeds over 15 miles per hour and the result is smooth, motor-saving sailing down the open road.

Motorists driving through heavy city traffic, for example, will probably put the gear selector in "traffic range" when approaching the busy sections of the city and leave it there until they are again on the open road. Cross country drivers may put the gear selector in "cruising range" and leave it there all day long, not changing it for the occasional traffic light or stop sign. Backing up is accomplished in the conventional manner.

See our Classified Ad column.

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"CLEAN AS SUNSHINE!" Why, many of us have our electric water heater installed in the kitchen or the games room because they are so clean. And so good-looking. Those modern models really do dress up a room. And as for being dependable, why, electric water heating's...

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