

# *The Methodist Church Story*

By ALICE BAKER



**THE METHODIST CHURCH**

**EAGLE,**

**WISCONSIN**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Chronicling the events of an institution covering a span of years from 1839 to 1971 requires the help of many people. To them I extend my heart-felt thanks. They are:

Miss Ruth Gower, Methodist Manor, West Allis, who read Elizabeth Wilson's book, *METHODISM IN EASTERN WISCONSIN*, and selected the Circuit Riders who were the first to minister to pioneer people.

Mrs. Mabel Thomas and Mrs. Laura Redford, Register of Deeds, who made possible legal records relating to church history.

Mrs. Pearl Hinkley West who gave word of mouth records of events. Her knowledge of early days in the church were, indeed, very helpful.

Mr. Ernest Hinkley, Port Townsend, Washington (deceased) who gave much history and did much investigation for early days.

Mrs. Minnie Earle Cole (deceased) who furnished the photo of her grand-father and gave a very complete biography of him.

Mrs. Florence Pardee who has been associated with the church for eighty years.

## THE EAGLE METHODIST STORY

by Alice Baker

The year was 1836 and the season was summer. Settlers from Britain, New England, New York, and Pennsylvania poured into Southeastern Wisconsin in a virtual flood. For some time these sparse settlements had no religious services, at least no recorded ones. Tradition carries the story that Dr. Daniel Bigelow at Eagleville was approached one day by an itinerant preacher and asked if he would not like to sponsor a church service, to which request he agreed. One writer gives the date as 1836.

For several reasons, the writer of this history thinks that date a trifle early. Dr. Bigelow did not come to Eagleville till December 1836. At that time the region was sparsely settled. A. R. Hinkley had staked his claim on sections ten and eleven and had returned to New Hampshire to seek a wife, leaving his brother Henry to retain his claim. Wm. Sherman (on the present Lueck farm) had gone back to New York state to get his wife. He had built a cabin; cut wood; cut marsh hay for the horse he left. Ebenezer Thomas had come in October and had located on land east of Hinkley's sections. Harrison Ward had taken up land (the present Nelson farm, (Mary Lu's beauty shop place). There were Melendys' and Crerars in the western part of the present town of Eagle. All told not a group large enough to promote a service.

Furthermore, Bigelow purposed to build a saw mill. There were trees to cut for what shelter he would need. At that winter date he would be fortunate indeed to have an open season and Wm. Sherman seems to assure that fact as he says in his memoirs that the first of November he slept outside since the weather was unusually warm. But Bigelow had to construct a dam before he could use his saws. The final clincher for a later date for the religious service is given by the biography of Harvey Wambold, grand-father of the present Harvey, which states that the present mill was built 1839. (All evidence of the mill was razed several years ago). In the light of all these facts, evidence of the first religious service puts the date between 1837 and 1839.

But who was the Circuit Rider who approached Bigelow?

Elizabeth Wilson in her book *METHODISM IN EASTERN WISCONSIN* tells several things about Circuit Riders, some facts of which are indeed pertinent. A man named Pillsbury covered the settlements of Caldwell, Burlington, Troy, East Troy, LaGrange, Elkhorn, and Lake Geneva. Since Eagleville is less than five miles from Old Troy, that first cleric might have been Pillsbury. However, he could have been Halsey.

Quote from E. Wilson's book:

"A Rev. Jesse Halstead rode the Aztalan circuit 1837-38. This

Homes and school houses were the sites of church services until 1860 when Mr. John Hage bought the vacated old first school house.

includes Ft. Atkinson, Watertown, Lake Mills, etc. He was noted on various records as Halsey, Rev. Halsey or Elder Hollister but I surmise that the names are for the same man."

Further quote:

"There is uncertainty (probably about actual date) in regard to origins at Eagle. One record says: The nucleus of the present first services was at the house of Mr. Cross and Mr. Halsey is said to have been the preacher." (p. 57)

Later quote:

"This good man was sometimes obliged to walk to a meeting place. Exhausted because he was carrying his saddlebags, he would lie down to rest at the settler's house while the children would go to the neighbor's houses and announce a meeting to be held that evening."

This testimony is corroborated by facts found in the 1880 Waukesha history:

1. The first Sunday School was held at the home of a Mr. Cross.
2. One of the earliest marriages was of Jonathan Parsons and Miss Jane Cross.

(The writer of this history has had to assume that the Mr. Cross, father of Jane Cross, was Mr. William Cross as the only recorded purchase of lands in Waukesha County was by William Cross who purchased in 1843 part of sec. 18 of the town of Mukwonago. The propinquity of sec. 18 of Mukwonago and section 25 of Eagle [Jonathan Parson claim] was sufficient to make romance possible.)

Additional information about the early Circuit Riders of the vicinity of Eagle is found in the Centennial program of the Little Prairie Church (1951). It records:

"In the year 1851 Methodism began in the Little Prairie Church. The traveling preacher in charge was Rev. E. S. Bunce and the circuit covered included the following: Spring Lake, Genesee, Eagle, Little Prairie, Palmyra, Round Prairie, Heart Prairie."

Settlers in and around Eagle were not indifferent to Christian worship even if there was no edifice in which to carry on that devotion. They gave their homes. They made use of their school houses and even held services in new barns. In 1841 the school house in Dist. No. One was the structure that served for school and church. In 1843 A. R. Hinkley hewed his own timbers and built a barn. Services were held in this barn. A. R. Hinkley fostered church services by Circuit Riders. In Mrs. Betty Ebert's, "Eagle Eye", she tells of one service in which an attendant openly castigated a Rider, where-upon Hinkley took the offender by the shirt collar and removed him from the service.

Where was it?

The old first school building is hard to locate. No one living could tell where it was. Fortunately, a letter from Mrs. Ida Hoswell Tanner of Milwaukee stated:

"As a little girl I attended Sunday School in a building at the foot of Diamond Hill."

Then speculation was What building? How near the foot of the notable hill?

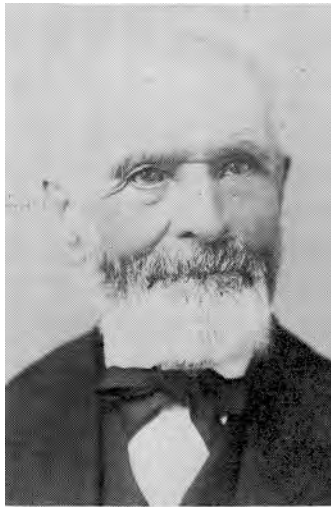
The building which preceded Gale's garage was negated because Mrs. Vinton Sherman, whose father, Mr. Matt Clohisy, had an Implement shop there and he had brought up the former Parochial School building from a spot opposite the present Auto Pound and had made it into an office. The building occupying the present site of the American Legion Hall was Mr. Nathaniel Hoswell's wagon shop; hence the first school site must have been farther to the east. Additional evidence put the site of the first school as that of the R. and R. garage.

Eagle residents of more than thirty years will remember an old oak tree east of the Diamond Drive-In. Still adhering to the roots of this tree was a wall of masonry which was the basal masonry of the first school building. Those same residents will remember a high, two-story house (24-30-12) which had been occupied by Herman Thiele's grand-mother, by Chas. Lewis and by Chas. Bahl. The latter two occupants used part of the building for a garage. Finally, J. V. Atkin purchased the building; tore it down using the lumber for the present R. and R. garage.

People will wonder why that site was chosen for the first school house. One can only solve that quandry by looking at the amount of down-grading of Diamond Hill. What a superior slide it would make when winter blew in! A daring boy could steer a sled dear to Main Street, hence the clinching argument for the site of a school. But with the arrival of the railroad in 1851 that site for a school house became a menace.

Then John Hage enters the life of Eagle. Hage, a lay preacher, was born in Averham, Nottinghamshire, Eng., October 10, 1811. He came with his wife to America in a whaling vessel; stayed six years in New York State and then came to Eagle in 1845. He purchased the farm now known as the Klode farm nearest the village. In the first few years of his arrival he preached in school houses at Eagleville, Palestine, and Jericho. Then noting the empty, abandoned school house, he purchased it for \$80 (one-tenth of its original cost), and generously gave the hamlet its use as a permanent church. In

this building he preached for years, and when his congregation proved restless for a change, he sold the church to them.



When the actual building of the present church seemed imminent, a site for it was necessary. Thomas Pittman and his wife Sarah deeded from their large acreage the following:

Waranty Deed Vol. 41, deeds pg. 535

Dated Dec. 28, 1870 - Recorded Feb. 11, 1871

Covers Pt. (part) of SE 1/4 of sec. 22 town 5 -- range 17E

99 ft. front by 165 ft. depth.

Some of the present members think that Pittman gave the whole lot from Main Street to Eagle Street to the church but they are mistaken, for Mr. Roy Wambold purchased the land south of the then existent church sheds from Mrs. Josephine Wingerter, a granddaughter of Pittman, and later from the church, the land on which the aforementioned sheds stood.

The 1880 Waukesha History then gives:

"The trustees of the First Methodist Church were John Hage, Jesse Tomlinson, Mr. Haswell (Hoswell), James Griffin, Daniel Griffin, J. (Jonathan) Parsons, Thomas Onyon.

Clergymen to date: Rev. Tilton, Cooley, Watkin, Eldridge, Carpenter, and the present (1889) Robinson."

There is no record as to who the architects were. Suffice it to say, the sanctuary of the present church has never been changed. It remains a simple, graceful hall with arching corbels which support the roof but do not shut off the ceiling space, a condition which fosters melodic music.

From 1871 till 1913 no change was made in the church except renovating the walls. Sometime before the turn of the century, in some of its periodic cleanings, a local painter with really artistic ability painted in the central front arch of a picture of Christ carrying a lamb in his arms. As one reads through the minutes of the church meetings, he senses the irritation of some church members against the picture and their urge to get rid of it. To some viewers of more modern church decor of crosses and dossels, the essence of Christianity is more poignantly shown by the gentle tenderness of the Christ bearing the helpless lamb and it is with regret that a work of art, truly meritorious, has been destroyed.

In those days the sanctuary looked very much as it does now, only the heating system was *passé*. It consisted of two mammoth chunk stoves; one in the north-east corner and one in the southeast corner as evidenced by the high wainscoting of the choir area. The raised platform extended as it does now leaving a space wide enough for two short pews always assigned to the primary class of Sunday School.

Comment should be made about the former straight-backed pews. Seat met back at right angles, a construction which was a boon to any preacher for surely no seat occupied was so uncomfortable, hence only bone-tired listeners would ever fall in them during a long dissertation. In the days of the Helping Hand, the women made cushions to ease, somewhat, their rigidity but each fashioner retained ownership of her cushion and if any speaker asked members to fill front seats, each owner took her cushion with her in the transfer.

Present day members will wonder how social events could be carried on in so cramped an area, and one must acknowledge that large crowds could not be accommodated. Early members, however, were as ingenious as their Yankee or British forbears, so provided wide boards which, the writer suspects, still do duty as the table tops of the longest tables now downstairs. These boards were placed across the tops of the pews and seated as many people as there were seats from front to back of the church. At the turn of the century, Mrs. Edward (Katy) Parsons donated the use of her oil stove, placed it in the left rear corner to produce hot coffee and warm dishes of the most tasty food good cooks ever made.

- 22. 1906 - 8 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — C. A. Tuttle
- 23. 1909 10 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — F.



MRS. ED PARSONS

A list of pastors  
Eagle Church

who served the  
follows:

Pastors of the Methodist Church

1. 1870 ..... North Prairie-Eagle — supplied by E. H. Tilton
2. 1870 ..... Eagle alone — John Hage
3. 1871 - 2 ..... Eagle and North Prairie — R. Cooley
4. 1873 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — supplied by Wm. E. Walker
5. 1874 - 5 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — J. S. Eldridge
6. 1876 - 7 ..... Eagle - Palmyra — C. E. Carpenter
7. 1878 - 9 ..... Eagle - Palmyra — W. B. Robinson
8. 1880 - 2 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — W. J. Fisher
9. 1882 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — J. H. Brooks
10. 1884 ..... Eagle - North Prairie To be supplied
11. 1885 - 7 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — Geo. Parsons
12. 1888 ..... Eagle North Prairie — J. C. Maxham
13. 1890 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — L. B. Clendenning
14. 1891 - 2 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — W. Medland
15. 1893 - 5 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — W. D. Cox
16. 1896 - 8 ..... Eagle North Prairie — J.S. Neff
17. 1899 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — W. W. Wilson
18. 1900 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — Alfred Pomfret
19. 1901 - 2 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — C. C. Casper
20. 1903 - 4 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — Thomas James
21. 1905 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — F. A. C. Crown

- Roberson
24. 1911 - 13 ..... Eagle North Prairie — John W. Perry
  25. 1914 ..... Eagle - North Prairie To be supplied and was by  
John W. Perry
  26. 1915 - 16 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — A. E. Tink
  27. 1917 - 19 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — Alfred Hoad
  28. 1920 - 24 ..... Eagle North Prairie — Willard Perry
  29. 1925 ..... Supplied by John Wilcox
  30. 1926 - 29 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — Edward Langdon
  31. 1930 - 35 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — W. B. Petherick
  32. 1936 - 37 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — Carl A. Lordahl
  33. 1938 - 41 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — Samuel G. Beers
  34. 1942 - 46 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — T. Gordon Amphlett
  35. 1947 - 48 ..... Eagle - North Prairie — Ralph Edwards
  36. 1948 - 49 ..... To be supplied — J. W. Tomlinson  
In 1950 Eagle separated from North Prairie
  37. 1950 - 52 ..... I. Dean Jordan
  38. 1952 - 54 ..... Alvin Briggs  
In 1955 Eagle was merged with Troy Center and Alvin  
Briggs continued till and through 1956.
  39. 1957 - 59 ..... Robert Kuhn
  40. 1960 - 61 ..... Robert Ochsenrider
  41. 1961 - 63 ..... W. Robert Fegan
  42. 1964 - 65 ..... Wm. Bastian
  43. 1966 - ..... Daniel Robertson

After the building of the church in 1871, no record of association with any other church could be found until the year 1874. In some very old books in the custody of North Prairie there was a list of members at Eagle and also of members at Little Prairie. Elizabeth Wilson, however, gives in her list of pastors, - "North Prairie and Eagle supplied by E. H. Titon in 1870" and follows that statement with "1870 Eagle alone, — John Hage."

In 1871 Eagle is again linked with North Prairie but in 1876 to 1879 is served with Palmyra charge. From 1880 to 1950, however, continuously Eagle was part of the North Prairie - Eagle charge.

#### THE MINISTERS

As one scans the long list of men who have served the church at Eagle, he can but ponder their real contribution to the well-being of their parishioners. What family life was more serene? What young people have been guided to lives of integrity and true worth? What solace has been given to families in times of tragedy and sorrow? What level of morality has been maintained and elevated by the devoted men who headed the church?

Any summary of the work of any of the pastors who labored here depends on the knowledge of the people associated with them. At

this late date, however, sons and daughters, and even third generation descendants are necessarily the source of information.

The earliest pastorate about which the writer had any knowledge was that of Wm. Medland, 1891 - 92. Although North Prairie maintained that parsonage for incumbent pastors, still the Medland family lived in the home now owned by the writer of this history. Medland's oldest daughter is still living (1968) in Florida and in 1968 vacationed in Genesee. Through contact with her I tried to solve this problem. She was unable to help on this question, but she was able to recall that the church membership was just twenty. Well past ninety years of age she delegated her daughter-in-law to write her letter to me.

Following the Medland pastorate was that of W. D. Cox, a young, vigorous man, keenly interested in prohibition and building up church membership. To achieve increase in attendance he conducted a two-week Camp Meeting in Albert Hinkley's wood lot just east of the present residence (1968) of Evan Rupp. The meetings were successful and many young people were added to the church rolls and a live Epworth League was formed.

The only secretary's books available begin with the year 1913, a date marking the service of Rev. J. W. Perry. At this time several groups of the church seemed to get an urge to improve the physical condition of the church. The huge old chunk stoves were decidedly passe', and according to records the Ladies' Aid was the prime mover for improving the heating system. At a board meeting they boldly offered to buy a furnace and, what was more, divulged that they had money enough in their treasury to pay for it.

But buying a furnace was small part of installing it. Every member was in favor of improving the heating system and the first step in installing was excavation of the basement. Messrs. Edward Parsons, Arthur Stead, and Winfred Cox (son of Rev. Cox) were named to a committee of excavation. A. J. Badinger, Leander Wambold, and Arthur Stead were in charge of the studding and concrete work. Later they were put in charge of buying and installing the furnace. This was done at a cost of \$250, but that sum was insufficient to cover all the costs, hence the remaining cost was to be paid by subscription.

The task was a cooperative one and all groups turned in to the job. The Sunday School paid for the basement lights; the Girls' Club finished the ceiling. Young boys, Roy Wambold and Dexter Badinger helped with the actual excavation in that notable year of 1914.

The digging began with sweat and grunt until a horse and scraper could get under. Then the dirt came out from the rear of the church.

One of the efforts to pay for the furnace was made by sponsoring a lecture by Bishop Quale, a popular man on the lecture circuits of that time. Minutes of that lecture show Quale's fee as \$10, but nothing of the church's net.

The costs of the furnace still were not met; owners pressed for payment. Money was borrowed at the bank and even in 1917 members were solicited for funds for paying for the furnace.

In the pressure-ridden years of World War I, Rev. Hoad was assigned to the North Prairie - Eagle circuit. He not only served his two regular charges but was given an additional place, having at one time four and five places to which to minister. But he managed. He rode to the Oramel Hinkley home after morning service; walked down the railroad track to a two o'clock charge at Eagle; had tea at a member's home and took the train back to North Prairie ready for an evening service.

In 1926 Edward Langdon came to Eagle-North Prairie church. Although a beginning pastor, he was a very active one. He instituted the practice of Greeters at the church; initiated the Vacation Bible School and the Bible Story Telling Contest. Lucille Fitzpatrick, an orphan, who had been taken into the Theodore Rhoads' home, won the prize. Her little girl diction and simplicity is still remembered by many with pleasure.

Reverend W. Byron Petherick followed Langdon with seven years tenure of great interest and church solidarity. It is needless to say that he was energetic and imaginative in his work. He instituted evening services consisting of book reports, biographies of great men. Once when he thought interest lagging, he primed some of his regulars to speak out in meeting in opposition to what he had said. The audience, though not sleepy, jerked to ALERT. The opposition maintained its opinion but the question was amicably settled. Petherick was fortunate in having a returned missionary family come to live in Eagle Dean Swift and wife, from Malaya, were both musicians. Swift led the choir and his wife was pianist thereby making a good choir possible.

One of the most ambitious attempts of the church was the sponsoring of a WLS Show held in the Masonic Temple. The Networks scheduled it for January, a daring date for attendance in rural Wisconsin. All went well the first two nights, but dawn of the third day found snow sifting down in a soft gray, treacherous silence. The last performance of the last night ended; the crowd dispersed; the WLS lady director figured up the gains and the tired pastor started home to North Prairie. All the way he buffeted snow but finally ended up in a bank from which he could not extricate himself. Sometime toward morning after much floundering and frustrating calls for help, he made his way home to warmth and sleep.

During his pastorate the parsonage at North Prairie was exchanged from the north side of the street to a better, more acceptable house on the south side of the street. Petherick's seven year tenure is mute testimony to his skilled Christian service.

Following Petherick was Rev. Carl Lordahl who served the parish for two years.

Rev. Sam Beers followed Lordahl — and again we had an extremely energetic and active pastor who found a cordial welcome from the people of both charges. Strongly humanitarian, he urged the congregation to take up some project for the alleviation of the numberless refugees from Hitler's Europe. Soon a talented person, a Miss Stern from Austria was welcomed to the North Prairie village. She was an opera singer and a voice teacher, an unusual person to help a rural choir. Later she located in Waukesha and found much outlet for her ability to teach Voice. In a few years, the tension in her native Austria abated and she returned to her home.

Gordon Amphlett came to the two churches for a four year term. He, too, was a successful and conscientious leader; built a strong congregation; a flourishing MYF and left the church in a thriving condition.

Ralph Edwards' term is notable for the change in fuel from coal to oil in 1948.

A series of short terms for pastors was the basis of dissatisfaction to the Eagle people. The short term of one man caused him to remark "You should separate from North Prairie."

Several of the most stable members of the congregation decided to visit Bishop Northcott and get his approval of the separation. The Bishop approved. Then a whole new field of work opened up. Living quarters were found, a very humble place but it would do temporarily, and a new pastor must be found. This new pastor must be a remarkable person; he must be wholly acceptable, diplomatic, pleasing, eloquent, affable. Six prospects were named. The Lord was with Eagle. Finally, Ira Dean Jordan and his equally gifted wife Anna Lee were chosen. They accepted their humble home and small town church with enthusiasm.

The young minister had much to do in a beginning charge and he went about it with vigor. He made a map of church territory and with help of his parishioners located their homes. He analyzed the membership of the church and church school; compared it with the community, the leadership and the financial status of rural Eagle.

The small cottage was no place for a permanent home for a minister's family, especially for a woman who was expecting her first child; hence in a few months a Parsonage Committee was chosen. Three homes were offered for inspection and after much discussion the former Thomas Pittman house on the southeast corner of Grove and Eagle Streets was chosen.

At this time, the District Superintendent, Earl Allen and Conference Treasurer, E. H. Matthews, thought that the church should be

incorporated and within a few weeks, legal measures were taken for such incorporation. The price of the place, \$7,900, seemed reasonable and acceptance was made, the manse being ready for occupancy shortly after Feb. 1, 1951.

After a short tenure, Jordan was sent as assistant pastor for the Waukesha Methodist Church and Alvin Briggs was picked for the Eagle post. The church hierarchy knew its pastors and Rev. Alvin Briggs was certainly the right pastor for a church taking its first independent Steps. Briggs had scarcely settled in the parsonage before he sensed that his role of pastor was also merged with that of public relations director. The village was installing a water supply system in June, 1952, and the church had to finance its share of the cost. The tax on two sides of the church and two sides of the parsonage was a sum which added much to an already over-loaded church budget. But Briggs knew that he had been chosen for meeting just such financial embarrassment and his years of service would be continually filled with questions of church solvency.

Soon the plumbing at the parsonage needed attention and the final solution was the digging of a new dry well. Next the furnace had the unfortunate habit of shaking all its coal into its base of its grates were not treated with legerdemain. In zero weather a frail woman could not cope with a furnace so recalcitrant. Since sickness might result from such heating cessation, the trustees saw the necessity of replacing the furnace.

To preserve the financial credit of the church, Rev. Briggs suggested and promoted two auctions and one field project of raising popcorn. The latter attempt needed so much cooperation of lay members that it was not remunerative. Although the record at Methodist Manor lists our affiliation with Troy Center, that linking came in the Briggs era. The District Superintendent and Rev. Briggs soon saw that we had too many obligations to go without help.

Alvin and Ginny Briggs always had a crowd of young people visiting them in the evening, raiding their ice-box at unpredictable time , but going all out to do a masterful job in the MYF. They took part in inter-church Booth contests and won one of them. They put on one of the most impressive Christmas programs ever conducted in the sanctuary.

Briggs started a fund for a church organ; started a church paper called the Eagle Methodist Messenger. He also took the MYF to Chicago to see churches and temples of various religions.

The Sunday School was crowded to the limit, a condition very convincing of the need for church expansion. But finances were still pressing and Eagle church people had been brought up on the idea that one should never incur debts that he couldn't pay, so a new building was postponed.

In Briggs' tenure, the State was looking for a site suitable for a Reform School and favored the Lean farm just North of the Trout Pond. The Official Board gave its sanction to that site. This confirmation, however, cost the church possible members and probably many favors.

The finest service that Alvin Briggs did for Eagle and its environs was his securing a doctor for the village. Working with the prominent people of the town, he did much in forming an Advancement Corporation; he secured an attorney to advise setting up a legal atmosphere for purchasing a site for a Medical Center, erecting a building; and finally securing a doctor and a dentist- Dr. W.E. Rosenkranz and Dr. Louis Mareno. Briggs tried very hard to secure some kind of industry for the village but no people had sufficient funds to risk sponsoring such business projects.

Robert Kuhn followed Briggs. His service marked one of continual repair of the parsonage porch roof, eaves spouts, etc. Rev. Kuhn was a highly cultured, spiritual pastor; he scheduled a Prayer Vigil from Jan. 31 - Feb. 4, 1958; he started an Intermediate MYF and asked for Lay licenses to preach for Emery Babcock and Stephen Foster. He got money together for making a contract with architects to plan an extension for the Sunday School, and in the year 1959 sent a delegate to the National Town and Country meeting at Wichita, Kansas.

During the Robert Ochsenrider's brief term, the drive for the Building Fund was continued and \$15,000 was borrowed from the Kettle Moraine Bank to be added to the \$17,300 already accumulated to pay for the new Educational Addition. The young people succeeded in painting the front arch and making, lighting, and installing the present cross. Credit should be given to Mr. Leroy Lippert now a resident of Delavan, Wis. As a memorial to his wife, Ethel, Mr. Wm. Hamann had the church chimes installed. The actual building of the extension was started September, 1959.

Robert Fegan was next to follow. He came from Minnesota and brought with him to the manse, three boys and one small daughter. The family was a big asset to the church. Mrs. Fegan was very appreciative of all Eagle had to offer and through this appreciation spared the wall to wall carpeting which the senior Kuhns had donated to the parsonage. A good housekeeper, she knew the value of closets and hooks to keep rooms tidy so she asked to have a closet made under the stairway. Two of the church carpenters, Roy Wambold and Dexter Badinger, Sr. donated their work and wisely suggested placing a series of shelves on the partition toward the living room.

During the Fegan three year sojourn, he had a strong MFY of which three of his sons were the leaders. He had solicited the help of the men of the church to complete many work jobs for both

church and parsonage. On November 25, 1962 the mortgage on the parsonage was burned with an appropriate ceremony.

Next the William Bastian family came. Like the Fegans, they were a family group which served the church. An out-going, pleasing family, much was accomplished in the two short years that they remained here. Rev. Bastian became an exceptionally popular pastor. He formed the Couples' Club; maintained a strong MYF and built the congregation to its largest number.

Dan Robertson's tenure beginning in 1966 was a facsimile of the times. Change and discord were the essence of that sincere servant of the church's stay. He had scarcely settled in the village before Racism raised its ugly head. Enjoined by his Bishop and more firmly his conscience, he cut short the church service to march with the Blacks in their first Milwaukee Demonstration. Eagle was to have a rude awakening in regard to her attitude toward the black race. Gone was the unanimous sympathy of pioneer days. A station on the Underground railroad of the 1840's and 50's was closed in 1968. A score of church attendants left the church voicing their disapproval of sympathy for Black Justice.

In 1968 the Methodist church ceased to be. It became the United Methodist Church with changes in procedure as well as in name. One of the signal changes of the church was due to the bequest of Mrs. Lila Burton. Her gift of \$10,000, the largest gift ever made to the church, made it possible to payoff the ever harrowing mortgage, to paint the church inside and out, to purchase a fine organ partially paying for it as well as putting a small sum in trust.

The members of the Eagle church should be very grateful for the remembrance which Mrs. Burton gave them. As a small child and up to adolescence she attended Sunday School. In adult years, like numberless other people, she limited her attendance to Easter and the occasional prominent events of that body.

During her teen years she attended Burlington High School and graduated from that institution. After graduation she was employed as an assistant in the Post Office. This experience later led to being Post-Mistress and in turn, made entrance to politics natural and from that step she was Mrs. Republican of Eagle. She toured more than one county in behalf of Julius Heil who paid her for her ardent support with a position on the State Board of Control. On this board she examined the housekeeping practices of several state institutions, the kitchens and larders of which were always necessary but which economic features could bring bankruptcy of not accompanied with judicious care.

From adolescence Lila was threatened with a form of crippling arthritis and had she a less compelling will-power, she would have

become a permanent occupant of a wheel chair. In the early onset of the disease, after dark, to cover the deformity of her affliction, she took walks even though every step was a racking misery thus avoiding that dreaded wheel chair sentence. The people of Eagle must ever be grateful for the many services she has rendered their community.

### **THE WOMENS' PART**

Women have always been a valuable asset of the church and Eagle profited by this asset. Before the end of the first decade of the century the women's organization was known as The Helping Hand and that flourishing group did much for the economic and social life of the church. A popular hostess often entertained as many as fifty guests at a meeting. There was little attempt at a program and less indication that the meeting was religious in nature. The women made quilts, quilted them, accumulated garments and bedding for many who had suffered disaster. or privation. And penny by penny the women's organization which by 1910 became known as the Ladies' Aid, amassed sums for many and various projects.

By 1940 the Ladies' Aid became the Women's Society of Christian Service and definitely religious in character. The meetings were opened with devotions and were followed by programs of missionary work or religious study. Even though, as now, every member of the church is considered a potential member of WSCS that membership represents "wishful thinking" and not reality.

When the Ecumenical movement of the church came on, that change, perforce, made change in every organization of the church and the WSCS became The Women's Society. In the change over a regulation that every member of the WSCS must sign the new charter and pay \$2 has done much harm. Women who have done much work in the society, when told they were no longer members until signing the charter, felt that they have been excluded from their organization and attendance has been diminished materially. The year 1969 marks the low ebb in the membership of the new Women's Society.

### **THE CHOIR**

Music in church service has rarely been evaluated as to the spirituality it evokes. The singing of spirited or impassioned hymns exalts the soul and listening to a majestic anthem lends meaning and fervor to worship. A regular and continuous choir is a decided factor in the success of any church.

For the most part, the Eagle church has had choir service, and some unusual talent in its choir. The writer recalls the statements of her father relative to Mr. Charles Hinkley, an uncle of Mrs. Pearl



Henry Earle and Charles Hinkley

Hinkley West. While words of admiration cannot be recalled, the appreciation of Mr. Hinkley's singing has been long remembered. His membership is recorded as 1874-75 but regrettably was of short



Edward Parsons



Theodore Franklin Rhoads



Myrtie Parsons Rhoads



Charlotte Parsons

duration. In very early youth he went to Chicago where he taught violin, piano and voice, and sang in, at that time, the largest church in Chicago.

Thanks to Mrs. Florence Pardee, many shafts of light are thrown on church history and especially the church choir. As a very little girl she lived on Hy. 59 in the large frame house built by Wm. Sherman in 1860 but then owned by her grand-father, Mr. Lambert Colyer. A tiny five year old, she was picked up by the Samuel Hage family and brought to Sunday School and church.

The church choir then consisted of Mrs. W.W. Perry, wife of the man who later became very prominent in Masonic circles; of Miss Myrtie Parsons, a young teen-ager but an adolescent who would be one of the main-stays of the church for many years; of Mr. Edward Parsons, her father, and Mr. W.E. Mayhew, a farmer and later a merchant.

But the Eagle choir was to have a new recruit, a young man from the state of Ohio, Theodore Rhoads, who came as a helper in the Harvey Clemens grain elevator. He was church-going and he loved to sing so he soon took the place of the baritone in the choir. Mr. Edw. Parsons sang bass, his daughter Myrtie took the soprano parts, another daughter, Miss Lottie Parsons sang alto, and Mr. Rhoads sang the tenor parts. For over thirty years this. Quartet furnished music for the church, soothed sorrowing people at funerals and contributed music to the numerous entertainments of the town and neighboring cross roads. Theodore Rhoads had a voice much above the usual small town level. He had musical training and a sensitivity to musical notation far beyond the common run of country choirs.

As time passed by and death took all the family that filled the choir, still the church was always fortunate in having some person or persons who could fill its various needs.

In the depression years, the Methodist church was fortunate in having a returned Missionary from Singapore and his wife to lead the choir. Mr. Dean Swift and his wife were both musicians and for a few years conducted the choir.

Later, a Miss Stern, a displaced person from Austria was hospiced by North Prairie and later by Waukesha. She had been a Grand Opera singer and a teacher of Voice. Her abilities and experience were gifts small towns rarely can secure.

Since the Depression years the church choir has always had a competent leader; Mrs. Aurel Pardee trained the choir for sometime and was organist or pianist for twenty-five years; Mrs. Dexter Badinger Sr. daughter of the teenage Soprano and the baritone previously mentioned has given many years to the worthwhile service of song in the Eagle church as have Mrs. Nancy Makal

and Mrs. Dan Robertson. Each has made the choir a continuing service and brought pleasure to an expectant congregation. Mrs. Robertson is especially gifted in training children to sing and in getting them to learn the words of their songs.

### THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Measuring the value of an organization is as futile as trying to snare a sunbeam, yet so much good, though unmeasured, results that the Sunday School persists and will be maintained as long as churches exist.

Faithful and unwearied teachers make that learning group successful and in every church history there will be out-standing persons who persevered in that worthy calling. One such steady teacher of the Eagle Sunday School was Mrs. Wm Cory who is reported to have taught a Boy's class for fifty years. Mr. Ernest Hinkley, Port Townsend, Washington loaned a quaint Christmas card he received from this revered teacher in 1900.

Whether she really influenced her boys to take up Christian Callings or not, the fact remains that three men, who as boys in her Sabbath School became respectively, a home Missionary and ministers. The three were: Charles Wambold, Dean Schofield and William Parker. The writer of this history had much difficulty in substantiating the claims made. The one remaining brother of Wambold has no knowledge of his work, but that brother was almost a generation younger, hence might not have known of his brother's service. Search for the clerical service of Dean Schofield resulted in a positive denial of such calling. This report was given by a nephew who stated that his uncle was a business man. But living contemporaries of Schofield state their knowledge of him as a minister. These contradictions of fact may be explained by assumption that as a young idealist he did enter the ministry but finding it a too exacting calling, he changed to the business field.

There is, however, no question about William Parker's work in the ministry, As a boy and youth he was very active in church work in the years that paralleled the teaching service of Mrs. Cory. There is no class records which contains his name but Sunday schools did not consider such records sacred. Parker attended the public school in Eagle; Normal School at Whitewater; later a year or so at Univ. of Wisconsin; and then finished his education at Harvard University. His Harvard years naturally placed him at Dedham and Reading Mass. charges of Unitarian churches. It is regrettable that his life was cut short at an early age.

No record would be complete if it did not mention the forty year service of Mrs. Phil Richart as Sunday School superintendent. In this age of urbanization few people are willing to take on any position that requires a continuous obligation but in the decades

1890 - 1930 Eagle. was. still rural and people had time for and enjoyment of the association of children. There have been many others who have guided the work of the Sunday School among them for periods of varying length; Mrs. Birdie Husten, Mrs. Arthur Belling, Mrs. Dennie Boyden, Mrs. Robert Finney, Mrs. Bernice Lueck, Mrs. Shirley Matters, and at present, Mrs, Ethel Knowlton.



MRS. RICHART

Work in one criterion by influence of the

the lives of the three men previously mentioned who took up work in Missionary service and the ministry undoubtedly the devoted service of the Sunday School teachers played a large part in the choice of that calling. Of course other factors influenced these men, among these factors was the sentiment of their families toward the Clergy. To this latter influence in recent years can be attributed the entry of Rev. Stephen Foster to the ministry. Born into a family who had a Missionary to Japan as paternal grand-mother, a minister as maternal great-uncle, whose father is a Gideon and humanitarian to the Nth degree, and a mother whose influence is wholly Christian and altruistic, his choice of the ministry as a vocation was a natural election.

Christian callings is which to evaluate the Sunday School. In

During the tenure of Rev. Alvin Briggs, he was given a license to preach. After finishing High School he attended Garrett Biblical institute and was ordained in 1967. He preached in a Negro church in Chicago and in Mercer, Wis. during the summer. Last

year he was asked by Rev. Clarence Kelly to be his assistant pastor at Elm Grove, Wis. He is soon to complete work in theology that will confer on him the Doctor of Divinity degree.

No chronicle would be complete if it did not mention benefactors of the Sunday School. And the first man to give money to the school was Jonathan Parsons. Since he died in 1876 a considerable number of years have elapsed for the school to have received interest on the sum., \$500.

Parsons was always interested in children and their education. Before any public school was built, Wm Sherman writes in his memoirs that he (Sherman) built a second log cabin and joined the two with a corridor in which a school was kept with Jonathan as the teacher. He also tells of building another school at the second rise above the creek where Jonathan was also the teacher before the Miss Goodrich, traditional first teacher, took up instruction in the building now standing in Jericho.

In 1859 Parsons built the large brick house on Hy. E one or so miles south of Hy. (Now) NN. A prominent man in the town of Eagle, he represented that region in the Territorial Assembly in 1842-44 which body was constructing the State Constitution.

It is only natural that interested members should know what became of the sum. For many years the money was invested and the Sunday School supplies were purchased with the interest. The sum was then lent on northern Wisconsin cut-over lands. When hard times struck that impoverished region, payment ceased and the sum was lost altogether. For many years an enlarged portrait hung in the Sunday School rooms and now on oil portrait of him hangs in the rear of the church.

Not only was Parsons beneficent but he seemed to transmit that trait to a grand-daughter, a Mrs. Leona Alford, who provided funds to build two rooms of the new Educational extension.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS! In this church. One hundred and forty three years of Christian service for the town and its rural environs. Who can evaluate the worth of such constant ministration and its timeless and perennial service to a community?

The present pastor, Rev. Robertson, in his grasp of the needs of his flock usually begins the service with a prayer of confession, A typical one follows:

"O holy and merciful God, we confess that we have not taken upon ourselves with Christian joy the yoke of being obedient, nor have we been willing to seek and to do Thy will. We have not loved you with all our heart and soul, neither have we loved our neighbor as ourselves. You called us to the need of our fellows, and we have passed by on the other side of the road.

In the pride of our hearts, and our unwillingness to be ashamed of ourselves, we have turned away from the cross of Christ, and have grieved Thy Holy Spirit.” Amen.

Economically the United Methodist Church of Eagle never was in so good a condition. We have an Educational Extension large enough to foster a provocative program for whatever population growth is destined to occur; the whole church plant has been renovated and in excellent shape; the new church organ is of a quality rarely found in so small a community. The Care Rings have inaugurated a program and given a slant on commonwealth that should give to a town worth that will be felt time long and world wide.

What the church needs now is Enthusiasm ... Joy in doing the good deeds it has always sponsored, everybody wanting a job and joyously serving; a Day of Pentecost for every church attendant.