

The Dillman Church of Curby Indiana

I wanted to share this story about the Dillman Church that was given to Roberta Toby by Mary Alice Dillman Wright. Lane Mae Dillman Parkhill is the author of the letter. The church ended services on August 29, 1993 and has since been abandoned and fallen into decay. Unfortunately I do not have access to any photos of the church when it was still in use, thus a modern day photo was used for the cover. -bP

Down Memory's Lane

Today we will take a stroll down memory lane, via our uncle, Russell Elwood Dillman's recollections concerning one of the oldest landmarks that stands near Curby, Indiana. This landmark, of which we are going to reminisce, is the Dillman Church. It has stood proud and tall, in this community for more than 75 years, braving many a storm that beat upon its doors. The devastating tornado of 1974, that swept a path across the entire county, came within 1 mile of the church, but it was spared.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, a visiting minister would visit the community of Curby and conduct services on Saturday night, Sunday morning and Sunday night in the little schoolhouse. Friends and neighbors looked forward to these gatherings, to hear God's word and sing songs of praise. It was customary for someone to invite the minister to their home for the night and to eat Sunday dinner. On one such occasion our great grandmother invited the minister to her house for Sunday dinner. During the course of the meal the minister asked, "Who was the young barefoot lad who led the singing this morning? Our grandfather's face matched the red checked tablecloth, as his mother replied, "That was my son, David Hendrix." Shoes were not worn by children until they were 16 or 18 years in those days. Parents could not afford to buy shoes for their children to wear when it was not absolutely necessary. Wearing shoes to church was not considered an absolute necessity. Another embarrassing situation occurred for our grandfather when he was a young lad, concerning the minister. His mother, Elizabeth Dillman, went to church at the little schoolhouse one Sunday morning. Her son stayed at home. She left strict rules that he watch the boiling hen on the stove, that it might be ready to pop the fluffy, light dumplings into the broth when she returned with the minister. Grandfather, David Hendrix Dillman, salted and peppered the cooking hen, but wait--when he shook the pepper shaker--, lo, the lid fell off and the entire contents were dumped into the boiling broth. He dipped out as much of the pepper as possible, but we can imagine the preacher had a "hot" sermon that night.

For several years the people had longed for a real church house. Finally a decision was reached. The community would have a church. The respected pioneer men of the

neighborhood had reached a decision. They would donate materials and their labor. It would be a church built of love.

About the year 1905, one could see huge virgin trees being felled by the saw, on farm after farm. Logs so long, they could hardly negotiate the curves in the road, were dragged by horses, to the sawmill to be sawed into timber for the new church. Enthusiasm ran high, as work progressed and men worked long hours seeing their dream take shape. Included among the men who donated much time and material were: Kelly Jenkins, Henry Jenkins, Jesse Jenkins, Walter Coleman, Samuel Batman, Carter Batman and our grandfather, David Hendrix Dillman. There were others who assisted, but these names are the ones our uncle Russell Dillman can remember.

The Rev. Lutes was the first pastor of the new church. He was a bricklayer and built several of the old brick buildings in English. The tolling of the church bell could be heard as far away as Temple. The first funeral was for the mother of our grandfather, Mrs. Peter (Elizabeth) Dillman, who died May 8, 1908. The 2nd funeral was that of Mrs. David Hubbard, who died May 10, 1908.

Our grandfather, David Hendrix Dillman, furnished the lumber for the seats. They were made from the best trees, beautiful walnut, but the lumber was not given time to dry. The seats were made from "Green" lumber and when the lumber dried out, not even the thought that our own grandfather made the seats, helped when one sat on them. We are glad to know those seats have been replaced.

We, (Lena Mae, writer of story), have many fond memories of the Dillman church, the church we attended until we were married. The first recollection we have of attending the church was an all day meeting in Aug. 1926. We rode in our Model T Ford, which our father had bought the previous year. It was quite an improvement over the buggy, although I cannot recall having ridden to church in a buggy. The car had 3 doors (no door on the driver's side) and side curtains that snapped in place when it rained or was cold. The curtains took the place of our glass windows of today. Learning to get into the car, when the side curtains were on, was quite a feat. Another fond memory was the Sunday school primary class. Eunice Boss (Stephenson) was the teacher. Each Sunday, when present, a blue bird was pasted on a branch of a beautiful tree. After 12 weeks, we were allowed to take our pictures home. Our picture hung on the wall until it faded beyond recognition.

In later years, good men like Bealie Rolle, Homer Summers, Artie Stephenson, Clive Parr, Roscoe Bowman, Ralph Dillman and others, also had a dream. They spent many hours remodeling the church, and today it still stands, leading people to God, more beautiful than the day it was built in 1905.

- Lean Mae Parkhill