



A Brief History of the Origin and Organization  
of the

# A. M. E. CHURCH

of Bellefonte, Pa.

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## **The Dedication.**

The Fortieth Anniversary and those who Participated  
in the Services.

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# William H. Mills History

## PREFACE.

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Dear Members and Friends of St. Paul's A. M. E. church, of Bellefonte, Penna. For several months past your humble servant has most profoundly felt the importance and necessity of giving to the present members, as well as those who may compose the future church, some knowledge of the origin of St. Paul's A. M. E. church in Bellefonte. The particular incident which occurred to prompt me to this action, I shall relate briefly. While I was busily engaged one day at my occupation, a gentleman preparing a directory called at my place of business and wishing to ascertain the number, names, and a bit of history of the different churches, he interrogated me as to the name, doctrine and origin of my church. The name and doctrine I was quite able to give him, but as to the origin I was unable to tell. This so completely embarrassed me that when the gentleman left I determined that there must be a little history connected with the A. M. E. church here somewhere, so I started out to hunt it up. After making diligent search for papers or records, I was unable to find any, as everything in the shape of records had been lost long before the writer had become identified with the church in March, 1881. I then resolved to make some inquiry of some of the oldest and most responsible colored citizens as to the early organization of the A. M. E. church here. The following information was given to me by the following persons, according to their memory, namely: Meshic Graham, Mariah Green, Margaret Powell and Tama-

zine McDonnell Dear reader, in presenting this book I do not presume to give you all of the facts connected with the origin of the A. M. E. church at Bellefonte, for the reason which I have already mentioned, but hope you will allow it to suffice if I give you the facts as they have been gathered by your humble servant from the very responsible persons whose names appear above, and I sincerely hope what I have written may prove valuable to the present members of the church, and all others who may continue favorable and friendly to the christian organization in future years

I am your obedient servant,

WILLIAM MILLS, SR.,

Church Clerk.

November 8th, 1908.

### History of the Organization of St. Paul's A. M. E. Church, of Bellefonte, Penna.

The organization of St. Paul's A. M. E. church of Bellefonte, is the result of a controversy which arose in the Wesleyan church, located on East Logan street, about the year 1853, between the Wesleyans and the Bethelites, as they were then called. The controversy continued until it finally led to a separation of the two societies, which had been meeting and worshipping together. The Bethel communicants had now determined to organize a society of their own, which they did, and which is now called the "African Methodist Episcopal Church." The chief promoters of this new society were Ephraim Caten, John Welch and Samuel Powell, all three of whom died long since. After the death of those old fathers, the records of the organization by some means or other, were lost, as has already been stated, and have never been recovered. The number of the new society at that period were five, namely: John Welch, Susan Caten, Mariah Welch, Margaret Powell, Mariah Green, Ephraim Caten and Samuel Powell. The two latter gentlemen were unconverted men, but very earnest and energetic for the cause of the new organization. The first religious service by the A. M. E. society after the separation from the Wesleyans, was held at the residence of Ephraim Caten, who lived on West Lamb street, between St. John's Episcopal church and the electric

light plant of today. The officiating minister on that occasion was Rev. Willis Nazery, whose services had been secured by Ephraim Caten, John Welch and Samuel Powell. Rev. Nazery was a very exemplary minister, and served the people as their pastor for some time, gradually growing in popularity and distinction among African Methodists. He was later ordained Bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal connection, and is very commendably spoken of in Rev. Bishop Daniel A. Payne's history of the church.

### Enfeebled Condition of the Wesleyans.

Owing to the enfeebled condition of the Wesleyan society by the fatal separation, the remaining portion of them sought other places of worship, but found none so agreeable to them as prior to the separation, consequently many of them united with the A. M. E. society. As the A. M. E. society had now begun to increase so rapidly in numbers, they were compelled to abandon the old home of father Caten as a place of worship and seek a more convenient place. After some considerable effort had been made by those noble fathers they finally succeeded in securing a dwelling house from Mr. Frank Steele, a white gentleman, whose house was located on the alley leading up from South Thomas street. This house they fitted up for a place of worship, and remained there for some time, having held religious service from house to house until early in the year of 1859, when the officers moved to a one-story frame building which stood at that time adjacent to the present church edifice. In that small structure, which was being used as a school house for colored children, many precious souls were soundly converted to God. The society by this time had grown so rapidly that in the same year, 1859, the officers were compelled once more to seek a more commodious place of worship. A new effort was now to be made to suit the convenience of the growing membership, and was speedily accomplished by the following persons, namely: John Williams, George Simms, Sr., and Ephraim Caten. These men, actuated by the purest motive, formed themselves into a committee and consequently resolved to call upon Mr. William A. Thomas, a wealthy white

gentleman, a member of the Society of Friends, and also an unquestionable friend to the negro race.

Dear reader, at this juncture I shall have to ask your pardon and kind indulgence for this digression, as I feel deeply impressed to speak of the humane character of Mr. Thomas, which I feel sure is yet unknown; especially to many of the young people of our race and generation. Mr. William A. Thomas, as I have mentioned, was a member of the Society of Friends and also a bitter opponent to human slavery, like hundreds of other grand and noble men and women identified with the same Society of Friends. So strong was the sympathy of Mr. Thomas and his estimable companion, Mrs. Eliza Thomas, toward the fugitive slaves that their own fine private residence often afforded a shelter and hiding place for many men, women and children fleeing from the cruel hand of slavery to a land of freedom. Such was the character of Mr. Thomas, on whom the committee which I have referred to called upon to solicit his aid in securing a more convenient place in which to worship. Out of the goodness of this gentleman's heart, and the unfeigned sympathy of both him and his estimable wife for this struggling church, they resolved at once that the petition of the committee should be granted. In consequence, Mr. Thomas deeded to the A. M. E. society the lot upon which the present church edifice has been erected, and which is to be retained by the A. M. E. church as long as religious services are conducted by them in this edifice. The deed has been legally signed by Mr. William A. Thomas and his wife Eliza Thomas, and remains in the possession of the trustees of the A. M. E. church in Bellefonte, Pa., at this writing. One other special act of kindness of Mr. Thomas, which is a further proof of his sincere friendship to the men and women of our race, was the purchasing the freedom of Mr. John Williams, his wife, Mary Williams, and their son, Isaac. Uncle John, as he was called by every one who knew him, was an honest, upright man, of which the writer can attest. Uncle John Williams and his wife Mary, were the father and mother of a very large family of boys and girls, five of whom survive them, namely: Isaac, Joshua, Jacob, William and Mariah Williams, Tamazine McDonnell, Mary Harding and Julia Hawkins, all of whom are residents of Bellefonte at present with the excep-

tion of the latter two, who moved west some time since John Williams was employed by Mr. Thomas as a sawyer on the old mill that stood on the site of the present F. W. Crider mill, at the time his freedom was purchased by Mr. Thomas, and by his energy, thrift and economy succeeded in saving enough of his earnings to refund the purchase money to Mr. Thomas for his kind and friendly act.

If the reader will kindly indulge me in this digression, I should like to mention some of the good deeds of other of our friends, early residents of Bellefonte in the dark days of servitude. I take great pleasure in recalling the names of Mr. George Valentine, Sr., founder of the Valentine iron works; Bond Valentine, Sr., Abraham Valentine, Sr., Robert Miller, Sr., and Ex-Governor Curtin, dec'd., all heads of the first families of Bellefonte. I mention these tried and true friends for the reason that they were men of high character, noble principles and aversion to human slavery, each of them being directly or indirectly connected with what was known in those days as the "under-ground railroad." The specific labors of those true and sympathetic men and their very estimable wives, can never be estimated by our yet struggling race for the interest which they manifested in rescuing and piloting men, women and children to a place of refuge, Canada being the principal house of refuge. No time nor means were spared by those eminent friends in shipping the fugitives to a land of freedom and safety, from the clutches of the master, cruel slave driver and the kidnapper. I wish to make special mention of the very humane act of my friend Ex-Governor A. G. Curtin, deceased, in endeavoring to rescue a runaway slave, whose name was Henry Thomas. The circumstances are thus. Henry Thomas, about the year 1856, had succeeded in eluding his master in one of the southern states, possibly the state of Maryland, and found his way to Bellefonte, where he secured employment at what was known as the "Pennsylvania House," on the site where the Brockerhoff House now stands. Governor Curtin, then one of the most able jurists in Centre County and practitioner at the Centre County Bar, was employed on a certain case in Huntingdon county, at which time two or three men from the south made their appearance in Bellefonte, representing themselves as agents

stopping at the Pennsylvania House. They were in reality negro hunters, seeking fugitive slaves, which they were perfectly at liberty to do under the abominable fugitive slave law. These men succeeded in securing the service of Thomas to drive them through the country as agents, their route being through the Halfmoon Valley and heading for Virginia or Maryland. When they had driven a few miles into the country, they bound Thomas with cords such as were used in those days to make the fugitive secure from escape. They proceeded through the valley in the direction of Huntingdon, and were met by Gov. Curtin on his return from that place. Mr. Curtin recognized Thomas, the slave in the conveyance, but was perfectly ignorant of what had transpired until he arrived home. He was then informed that Henry Thomas had been recaptured and taken back to his master. Mr. Curtin proceeded at once to gather a posse of men of his own sentiments and pursued the party, which was a very dangerous undertaking. But all was in vain, for the kidnappers had made good their escape, carrying poor Thomas back into slavery. The writer, though a small boy at that time, had the pleasure of often seeing Henry Thomas the slave. And now, dear reader, this will close the narrative relating to the achievements of the true friends of the race with which I am identified. I trust the souls of those noble men and women are basking in the "Sunlight of God's presence," and that the blessings of Heaven may rest upon their descendants."

### Dedication of St. Paul's Church.

I shall now return to my former task and speak of the dedication of St. Paul's A. M. E. church. In the same year, 1850 the wall of the edifice was built, and the corner stone laid. Rev. William Henry Grimes was the pastor in charge. The dedication followed the completion of the building. Rev. Bishop D. A. Payne, Rev. Linch and Rev. A. W. Wayman of Baltimore, Md., were present on that occasion. Bishop Payne delivered the dedicatory sermon, at which time a large concourse of people both white and colored assembled to witness the service. It was a grand day for the society of African Methodists in Bellefonte when they were no long-

er compelled to suffer the inconvenience of worshiping from house to house. At the expiration of Rev. Grimes' term as pastor, there followed a succession of ministry, the church gradually progressing until at present it has a membership of fifty-five. It has also a board of trustees, a board of stewards and a board of stewardesses. The trustees are elected annually by the legal voters of the church. All members of the church, male and female, who have arrived at the age of twenty-one years, are eligible to vote for trustees. The stewards are nominated by the pastor in charge, and confirmed by the quarterly conference. The stewardesses are also nominated by the pastor, and confirmed by the stewards or the quarterly conference, as the case may be.

### The Church Property.

I deem it proper to mention that the church property owned by the A. M. E. society at this writing, including the parsonage and appurtenances, is valued at two thousand dollars, which proves that some progress, though not so extensive, has been made in acquiring property since the days of the promoters of the A. M. E. church of Bellefonte.

### The Fortieth Anniversary.

The fortieth anniversary of St. Paul's A. M. E. church was held on the evening of September 22nd, 1890, under the pastorate of Rev. Cyrus N. Woodson. It was undoubtedly a grand success, though it is with reluctance I mention the fact that this was the first demonstration ever held in commemoration of the birth of the A. M. E. church in Bellefonte, so far as I have any knowledge. The cause of this lamentable mistake I have not been able to ascertain, but I am inclined to attribute it to a little thoughtlessness on the part of the earlier officers. It affords me great pleasure to give the reader an account of the anniversary service, and those who participated in the same. On the evening of September 22, 1890, the pastor and congregation convened in the church at 8 o'clock, with Rev. Cornelius Asbury, D. D., L. L. D., of Pittsburg, Pa., presiding. The meeting opened by singing a selection, "Keep me day by day," by the choir. Rev. C. N.

Woodson then led in prayer, invoking the blessings of God upon the church and service, after which the choir rendered another selection, "Oh, it is Heaven at last." At the close of this rendition, the chairman announced that Rev. Woodson would deliver the welcoming address. Our pastor delivered a very excellent address, making the audience feel good humored and perfectly at home. At the close of his address the choir rendered another selection, and your humble servant, on being introduced to the audience, read an historical paper on the early organization of the A. M. E. society. In his introductory remarks he spoke as follows: "Mr. chairman, ladies and gentlemen and members of the A. M. E. church. I would not dare to proceed with the duty involved upon me without first acknowledging my gratitude to God for His Divine favor in permitting me to witness the first anniversary service of the organization of this church, after a lapse of forty years. I also thank the Committee on Arrangements for the honor which they have conferred upon me as their choice to represent the officary of this church, and I sincerely hope that what I have accomplished in gathering data in relation to the early organization of the A. M. E. society in Bellefonte, may prove a blessing to the present and future members of this church." After the close of the introductory, the historical paper was read, as appears in the beginning of this book. The next speaker introduced was Rev. H. C. Holloway, pastor of the Lutheran church in Bellefonte, who represented Mr. F. E. Naginoy, Mayor of Bellefonte, who was to have spoken on behalf of the citizens, but was not present. Rev. Holloway spoke, at some considerable length, advising the church to be faithful to Christ and faithful to each other, in order to promote Christian happiness and success. He also reminded the audience of the charitableness of the citizens here and said he believed the congregation would receive all the financial aid requisite. Hon. D. F. Fortney, president of the Board of Education, followed Rev. Holloway and spoke along educational lines. He spoke of the advantage of having good schools and gave the parents good advice, urging them to see that their children attend school regularly and take every advantage of the opportunities offered. In addition to this grand advice he said that every facility was offered to the colored children as that of the whites, for an ed-

ucation, and recommended obedience to their teachers and the law which is the sure road to morality and good citizenship. The writer would like to comment on this very excellent address on the education of the youths, but for fear of departing too much from my original purpose, I shall have to decline. However, I believe it will not be out of place to say that from my own personal knowledge, I cannot recall another person who has taken a greater interest in the public schools of Bellefonte, and the education of the youths, than Mr. D. F. Fortney. Ex Governor D. H. Hastings, deceased, was to have delivered an address on "The Emancipation of the Negro," but for some unknown reason he was not present, and Rev. C. Asbury, took up the subject and delivered a very able address, holding his audience spell-bound for at least one hour, narrating the worth of the men of his race to this country and nation. He spoke of them in the highest commendation for their loyalty and bravery as soldiers on the field of battle, both in colonial days and during the civil war. Speaking of Abraham Lincoln, he spared no language of eulogy for the stand he took in the emancipation of four million slaves. Rev. Asbury did great credit to the subject, and elicited frequent and loud applause during his address. The next speaker introduced was my old familiar friend, Abraham V. Jackson. Friend Jackson concurred in the remarks of Mr. Fortney, especially that part which referred to taking advantage of the opportunities afforded for the education of our children. His speech was not lengthy, but full of advanced ideas, as it related to the early education and training of the youthful minds, thus qualifying them for usefulness in life. At times during his address, friend Jackson became quite humorous. I will mention one particular incident he related that occurred when he was about ten years of age. It is as follows: "At the laying of the corner stone of the A. M. E. church in 1859, he and other boys were privileged to place their contributions in the hollow square of the stone, which was gratifying to him. But a short time after, he became financially embarrassed, and concluding that his contribution still remained in the stone, determined if possible to get it. He made the effort to get his dollar, but being informed that his money had been taken out, to be applied to the building, he found himself still

minus a dollar." The story caused considerable laughter. Rev. Ashbury, D. D. then made a few remarks in response to Hon. D. F. Fortney, and then called upon the audience for a free will offering, receiving a neat sum for the church. The choir then sang the closing selection entitled, "Blessed Refuge of My Soul." This was the most soul stirring selection of the evening, animating the souls of the entire audience. At the close of this rendition, Rev. Holloway pronounced the benediction. The ladies of the church then served refreshments, consisting of ice cream, cake and other delicacies which were enjoyed by all who participated. The total amount of money raised for the evening was thirteen dollars and six cents (\$13.00)

### The Choir.

I feel that it would be doing a great injustice to this most excellent choir and the ladies and gentlemen who composed it, if I did not recognize the very efficient service they rendered on that memorable occasion. The choir was a select one, composed of the best talent in Bellefonte, among colored people. The ladies and gentlemen composing the choir were, Mrs. Lizzie Green, organist; Mrs. Mary Miller, Miss Maggie Harding, sopranos; Misses Katie Jackson and Georgie Woodson, altos; William Mills, Jr., and Arthur Thomas, first and second tenors; A. V. Jackson and William E. Green, bass. The writer can say without the least exaggeration, that those singers would have compared very favorably to many who had greater advantages in musical training.

### Financial Aid.

And now dear reader, in closing the history of the origin and organization of the A. M. E. church in Bellefonte, I feel that my work will not be complete until I shall have brought to your notice a few of the names of the many friends who have so generously aided the A. M. E. church with their means, when in dire need of financial as-

sistance. They are as follows: Ex-Governor James A. Beaver, Ex-Governor D. H. Hastings deceased, William P. Humes, Ex-Judge John G. Love, James P. Coburn deceased, Mrs. William P. Wilson, John P. Harris, Col. J. L. Spangler, S. D. Ray, S. H. Williams, James Harris and C. C. Shuey. These are but a few of the many tried and true friends who have never failed to respond to the appeals of the A. M. E. church for aid.



## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

According to the writer's recollection, there has always been a Sunday School connected with the A. M. E. church here, from the year 1859 to the present date, November 8th, 1909. But prior to 1859 I remember very distinctly of a Sunday School being connected with the Wesleyan church on East Logan Street, which was conducted by Mr. Samuel Ellis, one of the leading colored men of that church, and who afterward, with his family and quite a number of other colored citizens of Bellefonte, emigrated to the "Island of Hayti." As near as I can remember, this was about 1858. Quite a number of colored children often attended that school, but the majority of them received their religious instructions in the white churches. For instance, the "Episcopal church," then located on the hill southeast of the Court House, had opened its doors to colored children for religious instructions. The writer had the pleasure of attending that school, in his boyhood days, but I regret very much that I am unable to call to my mind the names of but two of the ladies who took such great interest in instructing the children. One of the ladies I remember was Miss Emma Benner, who in later years became Mrs. Cooper. She was a sister of Mr. Harvey and Thomas Benner deceased, and Misses Linnie and Sarah Benner, who survive them. The other lady teacher was Mrs. William Murry, wife of Mr. William Murry, who was cashier of the Messrs Humes, McAllister, Hale & Co's. Bank. Both of the ladies mentioned were pious Christians, and fully qualified to impart such religious lessons as the youthful minds require. Then too, the Presbyterian church, on Spring Street, was also ever ready, with open doors and outspread arms to receive any and all who needed religious help. Your humble servant shall never forget the Sunday he entered the Sunday School for colored children in

this church. I was in company with my friend, A. V. Jackson, and we were greeted with so cordial a welcome by the teachers that it made such a favorable impression upon us both that we were constrained to continue our attendance there for quite an extended time. The teachers I remember were Miss Louisa Harris, Miss Nannie Harris, Miss Marjorie Linn, Miss Eliza Harris and Miss Nannie Ammerman; all of them very estimable Christian ladies, and members of the first families of Bellefonte. Too much cannot be said in commendation of that church and its good people, for it was there I received my early religious instructions. It was our good fortune to have fallen into the hands of Miss Louisa Harris, for our teacher. I speak thus, because a more kindly and affable lady I had never met before, and I am not so sure that I have ever seen any since just like her, though there may be many. Nor can I forget the wonderful influence this lady had over her class of boys, and I can assure the reader, there were no "Angels among them." But the religious impression that sainted lady made upon the mind and heart of the writer, has been a lasting benefit. I have said there has always been a Sunday School connected with the A. M. E. church, dating from 1859 to 1909, a period of fifty years. But the interval between 1859 and 1877 a period of eighteen years, there cannot be anything said of its progress as the records of the school during that interval have disappeared as have the records of the early organization of the church. Carelessness seems to me to be the cause of the unfortunate mistake, which I greatly regret. But when we consider the number of disadvantages the men and women of our race had to labor under forty or fifty years ago, it is even marvelous what has been accomplished by them, as it relates to the perpetuity of the church. They were without proper school advantages, they were unlettered, and had no one to instruct them in the higher ideals of life, and when we remember too, how many have had the advantages of higher intellectual training and yet have failed to preserve their most important and valuable records, we conclude that those people under such unfavorable circumstances, are to be pitied rather than censured or condemned for the unfortunate mistake. I cannot authentically say just how long our children remained in attendance in these

they continued to attend the  
schools until the A. M. E.  
in 1859 and then they repaired to the  
local teachers and friends of those churches for  
the interest which they had manifested toward the children  
of a then oppressed race. I use the term oppressed for the  
reason that two hundred years of human slavery which ex-  
isted at that period is nothing more or less than oppression,  
and further, by its having existed has degraded us to such a  
degree that we became the subjects of the most barbarous  
treatment, criticism and insult, throughout the entire  
country, and that was also oppression, for there was no place  
comparatively speaking. But slavery has been  
forever abolished, "Thank God," and every man on this con-  
tinent, regardless of race or color, stands equal before the  
law. After the A. M. E. Sunday School had opened in 1859  
the writer, and the rest of the colored children attended there,  
but it was not a great while until the zeal of myself, and my  
friend Jackson, for Sunday School had grown somewhat in-  
different, and consequently, our attendance became very ir-  
regular. I cannot account for this lack of interest, unless it  
is that we had become like some I have known since, both  
boys and girls, who begin to think when they have arrived  
at a certain age, or height, that they are too large or too  
old to attend a Sunday School, which experience has taught  
me is a great mistake on the part of any boy or girl, for the  
particular reason, it is the early moral and religious training  
in the Sunday School or in the home, that tends to elevate,  
because those principles are of an elevating nature, and if  
thoroughly practiced, they will never fail to raise the indi-  
vidual to a high standard of manhood, womanhood and use-  
fulness. About eighteen years had elapsed since the interest  
of my friend Jackson and myself for Sunday School had  
ceased, for as we had arrived at mature years, the Sunday  
School seemed to us to be a something of the past, though I  
had never forgotten the impressions that had been made  
upon my mind and heart years before. But a new inspira-  
tion caught us about the year 1877 and we decided to visit  
the A. M. E. Sunday School once again which we did. On  
our arrival there one Sunday, we found Messrs M. S. Gra-

ham, John Welsh, George Simms Jr., John Williams and a  
few children, and they greeted us with a very hearty  
welcome. Those elderly men were accustomed to meet there  
every Sunday and read the Scripture, discuss the lesson and  
explain it to the best of their ability. There was no regular-  
ly organized system of conducting the school, and it had  
greatly diminished on account of not having a sufficient  
number of efficient officers and teachers. However, we con-  
tinued there taking our place in the class with the men I  
have mentioned. Our Sunday School literature was very  
limited, we were without an organist to carry on the musical  
part of the institution, so on the whole we were in a very  
embarrassing situation. But it was not long until Providence  
favored the school with the most efficient assistance, in the  
person of Mr. Stewart Lyon, a thorough biblical scholar and  
a Christian gentleman. Mr. Lyon did not come to us alone  
but he brought with him his daughter Miss Clara and his son  
Mr. John Lyon to assist in the work which was to begin.  
The elder Mr. Lyon at once took charge of the bible class, of  
which my friend Jackson and I were members. Mr. John  
Lyon also took charge of a class, and his sister, Miss Clara,  
presided at the organ, conducting the music, and from that  
Sunday the school began to progress. Mr. Stewart Lyon  
and his son and daughter continued their service with us  
alternately from 1877 to 1880 and during that period we were  
highly favored with other competent teachers to assist in the  
well begun work. We were favored with such persons as  
Mr. James Summerville, Mr. William P. Humes, Mr. Ellis  
Orvis, now President Judge of the Centre County Court, Mr.  
John Brooks, teacher of the colored public school, Mrs.  
Rebecca Pugh, Misses Clara Valentine, Kittie Potter and  
Lizzie Harris. With these very competent instructors, we con-  
tinued to progress until 1880. But remember dear reader,  
during those years of progress in the Sunday School work  
your humble servant was grasping every opportunity by  
which to better qualify himself for the work, as also my  
friend Jackson. Doubtless the reader may have been won-  
dering why I have mentioned the name of my friend Jack-  
son so frequently, during the course of my writing, so to  
satisfy any inquiry on the matter, I would say it is because  
of the very intimate relationship that has existed between us

since boyhood. Having been born in Bellefonte and reared here, we have always been more or less associated together in nearly all the walks of life, more than any other of our associates of former or latter years. And it affords me great pleasure to say, whatever differences may have arisen between us, we have always been able to adjust them without affecting our social relation in the least. I have said our school continued to progress until 1880. Near the close of that year Rev. John M. Palmer, a bright and intelligent minister, became the pastor of our church, while friend Jackson and myself were still identified with the Sunday School. But in the same year, friend Jackson, George G. Skinner and Charles Garner, Sr., were converted under Rev. Palmer and united with the church. The writer did not become converted until March 1881, and at the expiration of three months was received into full connection. In the meantime my friends Skinner and Garner began studying for the ministry, and were soon licensed as local preachers, to do local work in the church here. They continued with their studies, still working in a local capacity, until in 1888, at which time the Pittsburg Annual Conference of the A. M. E. church met in Bellefonte. At this time my friend Skinner was admitted to the conference and from that time began his itineracy. I am not so certain that my friend Garner was regularly ordained, but at all events he was given work by the conference, and they both entered upon their duties of the Christian ministry. But we must not lose sight of our friend and benefactor, Mr. S. S. Lyon and the closing days of his life with us, nor can we forget his son and daughter, who rendered such valuable service to us in our Sunday School. As I have mentioned elsewhere, Rev. J. M. Palmer entered upon his duty as pastor of the church here near the close of 1880, and by this time our friend Mr. Lyon, feeling we were now able and competent to conduct the affairs of our school intelligently he withdrew from the school amidst our gratitude and thankfulness for the kind aid of himself, son and daughter as well as his other co-workers. We were now left to ourselves to manage our own school affairs, and in the spring of 1881, it was suggested by the pastor that the writer accept the nomination for the superintendency of the school. This, of course, was a great surprise to me, and

caused some hesitation on my part in giving a definite answer to the suggestion, for the reason, I felt myself incompetent to assume the duties of so important an office. However, I decided to accept the office and when the day came for the election of officers for the school, I received the nomination and was unanimously elected to the superintendency, which office I filled from 1881 to 1907, a period of twenty-six years. Once during my term of office, friend Jackson became my assistant in the work, and once he was elected superintendent of the school and I became his assistant. He was filling the office of superintendent when Hon. D. H. Hastings was elected Governor of Pennsylvania in 1905, and then he resigned the office to accept a position with the Governor at the mansion in Harrisburg. I then filled his unexpired term and then was re-elected to the superintendency. I cannot but say our association in the school was always very pleasant, never having any cause for disagreements pertaining to the school work. But aside from the very pleasant moments we had spent together as officers and teachers, it is needless for me to say, that during those twenty-six years as superintendent of the A. M. E. Sunday School, I had my very dark seasons as well as the bright ones, as I candidly believe every one will have, who undertakes to superintend, or manage a school which has thirty-five or forty pupils of all sizes, ages and character. Any one who has had the experience in endeavoring to frame and shape the future destiny of a boy or girl, I believe will agree with me that it is one of the greatest undertakings that could confront any one. The greatest difficulty I experienced in my labors among the children, was in getting a complete co-operation of the parents, which would have greatly helped me in endeavoring to train the minds and improve the morals of the children. That, I consider a great mistake on the part of any parent who does not and will not assist the instructor in the Sunday School by exercising home influence, because it is in that department the parent expects the boy or girl to derive the greatest moral and religious benefit, from practical moral and religious teaching. Then, to inscul in the mind of the boy or girl these principles so essential to their well-being, it requires the co-operation of the parent, for it does not seem possible for the teacher to teach the boy or

girl in one hour and a half or two hours in the Sunday School, what would possibly require a week or a month teaching in the home. As I have made mention elsewhere in these pages of the very tranquil relations between my co-workers and myself, it affords me no small degree of pleasure to recall the name of Miss Katherine Miller, who afterward became Mrs. William E. Green, and who during my term of office, once or twice, became my assistant in the Sunday School work. I can say of this lady, she was faithful to her trust. She was always present where duty demanded. I found her to be very pleasant and agreeable in her manner, and quite forbearing. She was always willing and ready to contribute of her means to the support of the school, and I am pleased to say she still sustains the same relationship of good will, and always gives financial aid both to church and school at this writing.

Before closing the narrative of this department of the church, I wish to say to the reader, I resigned the office of superintendent in the summer of 1907, believing it would be for the betterment of the school, as I have always been of the opinion that for any one to remain in the same office after a certain period of years, either religious or political, would out-live their days of usefulness in that office. I resigned with my best wishes for the success of St. Paul's A. M. E. Sunday School, and the highest regard for my then pastor, Rev. C. P. Harrington, and all my co-workers in the school. But before I tendered my resignation I was able to point with great pride to five of my pupils whom I am sure are a great credit to the school, to their parents, and to themselves, namely: George Overton, who has since graduated from Howard University, in Washington, D. C.; Arthur Thomas, who is in the same University, studying medicine; Miss Laura Thomas, who is a teacher in one of the public schools for colored children in Baltimore, Md.; Mr. Robert Stewart, who was elected superintendent of the Sunday School after I had resigned, and by reason of his leaving town, Mr. Arthur Foreman succeeded Mr. Stewart to that office and is acting in that capacity at this writing. December 1909.

I now close, hoping the reader will kindly consider my much neglected education, and pardon any mistake I may have made in the attempt at writing this narrative of the A. M. E. church, and Sunday School, of Bellefonte, Pa.