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The region of the country occupied by the Point Pleasant Church, from the date of its organization, up to the time at which first, the Buffalo Church, and then others were organized, stretches over a large part of Mason county, and extends also into Putnam, on both sides of the Kanawha River, from the mouth to Red House Shoals.

In Mason county, this field includes within its bounds, the Upper or Dutch Flatts - Lower or Pleasant Flatts - Point Pleasant and Mercer's Bottom.

After the signal victory gained by the whites under the command of General Andrew Lewis, over the combined forces of the red men, led by the celebrated Chief Cornstalk, 10th of October 1774; this part of the country may be considered as having been opened for settlement by the whites. But the stirring times of the Revolution, no doubt delayed the rapid settlement of the fertile region. Those gallant men who by their valor contributed to the success of that engagement, and who survived the contest which cost the life blood of their comrades, bore back to their native homes, east of the Alleghanies, glowing accounts of this inviting land; as a consequence, we find that early in the present century, many who either in person, or by their names took part in the battle of Point Pleasant, sought homes in the Valley of the Great Kanawha, or on the Ohio, near where the former river is lost in the latter.

Their friends and neighbors were also induced to follow their example. As a natural result, it is found that those counties in what is now the old State, that furnished troops for the campaign, of which the battle of Point Pleasant was a part, have in this comparatively new country, many families whose names are still to be found in those older counties. Augusta, Botetourt and other portions of the valley not only contributed their part towards giving a quietus to the Indian warfare, but they also furnished many families, by whose persevering industry this country has been changed from the dense forest to the well cultivated lands of the present day.

The history of all these families that settled this region would prove a subject of no little interest to us.

This country was but partially settled before the beginning of the present century. A few families, it is true, had been brave enough to make the effort to settle in a new and exposed country; but it was not until after there was no foe with bloody tomahawk, and savage yell to keep the axe and rifle near enough to each other to be exchanged at a moments warning, that settlements began to multiply.

A history of these early settlers and their settlements would be, to some extent, a history of the Point Pleasant Presbyterian church, for although many of them and their descendants assisted in the upbuilding of other branches of the Christian church yet with a complete roll of the earlier settlers of this country, it would be found that many names are the same on both. The loss of the old Record book of our church is seriously felt, for that would enable us to complete the roll of original members, and also prepare such statistics as would show all the additions that have since been made, the transfers of members to other churches, and the losses by deaths.

Thus would we be furnished with a complete history, so far as the names of our members are concerned.

In a brief history of the church, prepared in 1861, to serve as the beginning of the sessional records of Buffalo Church, I find this statement: "A few Presbyterian families settled in the Valley of the Great Kanawha River, it is believed, between the years 1810 and 1820. They had occasional services, from Rev. Mr. Calhoun, pastor of the Kanawha Church, and Dr. J. McElhenny of Lewisburg, and perhaps other ministers, as they passed through the country."

There was however, no Presbyterian organization below Charleston until the year 1835. Under the ministry of the Rev. Frances Dutton, the Church of Point Pleasant was founded.

These efforts at building up our church in that portion of the field seemed to have been separate and apart from those confined to the regions round about Point Pleasant.

As early as 1815, Rev. Wm. Gould, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Gallipolis, Ohio commenced preaching occasionally in what is now the territory covered by the Point Pleasant and Pleasant Flatts churches, and in 1816 he commenced the regular ministration of the Word. In a brief history of Presbyterianism in our bounds, prepared and reported to Presbytery April 10, 1841, it is said of Mr. Gould, "His labors were blessed, and an impression made highly favorable to Presbyterianism." Some ten or twelve members were received and their names enrolled in the church at Gallipolis. In 1825 Mr. Gould left the county.

He was succeeded at Gallipolis, O., by the Rev. Mr. Brooks (father of Dr. Brooks of St. Louis) who continued to preach one fourth of his time at Point Pleasant. Mr. Brooks was succeeded by Rev. \_\_\_ Fisher, who for one year continued to preach at Point Pleasant one fourth of his time. Then the church at Gallipolis became vacant, and continued so for some time, and this region of country was without regular Presbyterian preaching. In those days there were no church edifices in this country and private houses, schoolhouses, or barns were occupied, and frequently a rustic arbor was constructed, which served in good weather as a pleasant place to meet and worship God.

The house of Mr. Samuel Alexander, near Arbuckle Creek and that of Mrs. Couch, on the opposite side of the river served as preaching places.

If you will visit the cemetery in Point Pleasant, a short distance from the gate and on your left you may now see a dark brown grave stone pointing heavenward. Upon it you will find this inscription: "The body of Francis Dutton lies here; born June 28, 1790 and was licensed to preach the Gospel by Lexington Presbytery in October, 1826. He commenced his labors in this region of country in the fall of 1834, and was ordained to the full work of the ministry in 1835. He was called away from his work on the 15th of August, 1839.

Faithful in His Master's cause, death had no terror to him. This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality."

In the "history" above referred to, it is said of Mr. Dutton: "He soon gained the confidence of the people and exerted a happy influence among them, and in 1835 the (Point Pleasant) church was organized and 14 members received." The members so far as I can learn were:

Michael Youns, Sr. and wife; Michael Youns, Jr. and wife; Mrs. Nancy Hawkins; Mrs. Harriet Amsden; Mrs. Eliza Lewis; Mrs. Sarah Couch; Mrs. Samuel Alexander; Mrs. Elizabeth Alexander; Mrs. Kincaid; Mr. James Mitchell and wife; Mrs. Eleanor Hale.

The field occupied by this minister was very extensive. He preached regularly in what is now the Buffalo and Arbuckle fields; Point Pleasant; the Lower and Upper Flatts; extending for many miles up the Ohio River; and occasionally went as far as Ravenswood, a distance of about 50 miles, above Point Pleasant. At one of his protracted meetings near Ravenswood, he received into the church one member who now resides in the Lower Flatts, and who was an original member of the Pleasant Flatts church at its organization.

We have not been able to get hold of statistics to show the actual increase of membership during the ministry of this faithful servant of God; but we know that "many were added unto the Church."

It was during his ministry that the first Presbyterian house of worship, was erected in this field. This is known as the Old Brick Church, Pleasant Flatts. There is now nothing left to indicate its situation; but crumbled bricks and a few grave stones, marking the resting place of those who were buried in the church yard. This church was built in 1837.

It was also during Mr. Dutton's ministry that a church; the first church was erected in Point Pleasant. It was built for the M. E. Church; but it was occupied by other denominations. This is still standing, and has for two periods been occupied by the Presbyterian congregation, when they were without a place of worship.

Mr. Dutton's ministry closed with his death in 1839, and many of his people, still living, speak of that event as casting such a gloom over them that they were in despair of ever getting another such minister.

The field was not vacant long, for in the latter part of the same year Rev. Robert Osborne "succeeded him in his wide field. The labors of Mr. Osborne continued from 1839 to 1855, and during that long period, was the only Presbyterian minister who labored regularly in Mason County. During this time two Presbyterian church edifices were erected. One in the Dutch or Upper Flatts, 12 miles from Point Pleasant, in 1850, known as the 'White Church'; the other in Point Pleasant, in 1853, now known as the "Old Presbyterian Church".

In 1855 Mr. Osborne resigned the Pastorate of the church, and was succeeded in the autumn of the same year by Rev. G. S. Woodhull, who commenced preaching regularly one Sunday in four at the town of Buffalo on the Great Kanawha, twenty two miles above Point Pleasant thus transferring the Arbuckle appointment to that place.

There the Presbyterian congregation worshipped in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, until Aug. 22, 1857 when they dedicated their new and commodious brick church to the worship of Almighty God.

At the Fall meeting of Greenbrier Presbytery in 1860 a petition was regularly presented, asking for the formation of a church at Buffalo. It was favorably considered and a committee, composed of Rev. Mr. Woodhull and Elder J. D. Thompson, was appointed to organize the church.

On the 9th of December, 1860, the day appointed, elder J. D. Thompson not being able to attend, was represented by elder R. Mitchell who, with the other member of the committee, organized the church with twenty members, all of whom were dismissed from Point Pleasant church.

Ruling elder Samuel Couch, who had been for some time an elder in the Point Pleasant church was elected and installed an elder in the Buffalo church.

Mr. R. H. Sterrett was at the same time elected, ordained and installed as a ruling elder and A. B. Alexander as a deacon. The church was then declared duly organized. At the meeting of Presbytery in May 1861, at Kanawha Salines, this action of the committee was approved and the Buffalo church was added to the roll of the Greenbrier Presbytery.

The following are the names of persons dismissed from Point Pleasant church to join Buffalo church: B. H. and Catherine Sterrett, Samuel and Sarah Couch, Samuel and Elizabeth Alexander, A. B. and Caroline Alexander, R. F. and Rebecca Puffner, George W. and Sarah F. Craig, Mrs. Francis Bright, Miss Mary J. Craig, Mrs. Fannie White, Mrs. Mary Donally, Mrs. Catharine Deem, Mrs. Eliza Bryan, John and Ellen McChesney.

Buffalo church was supplied by Rev. G. S. Woodhull until March 1861. It was then supplied by Rev. Mr. Neely for three months, after which it was vacant until visited by Rev. J. C. Barr, October 15, 1865.

Presbytery met at Buffalo, May 4, 1866 and appointed Rev. J. C. Brown to labor in the Kanawha Valley for one year. He supplied Buffalo two Sabbath a month till May, 1867.

The labors of Mr. Woodhull in the Point Pleasant church ended in the fall of 1862 and Rev. David Thompson of Tennessee now a missionary in Japan, preached in the churches of the Flatts and Pt. Pleasant during the summers of 1862-3. In 1864 he was succeeded by Rev. M. L. Todd who continued his ministrations until 1866. During the ministry of Mr. Todd, the church at Pt. Pleasant was divided; and part of the members received as a church, into the Presbytery of West Virginia, Synod of Pittsburgh, whilst the others remained as they had been, in connection with Greenbrier Presbytery, Synod of Virginia.

About the same time, or perhaps a little later, a church was organized in the Upper Flatts, in connection with the Presbytery of West Virginia. From that time to the present there have been two Presbyterian churches in this field.

In June 1867 arrangements were made with Rev. B. B. Blair, to supply the churches of Point Pleasant and Buffalo by giving to each half his time. Shortly afterwards he was installed as Pastor of these churches and continued as such until the date of his death, June 19, 1871.

During his ministry the congregation occupied the building of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, but at the same time the plan of building a new church was vigorously prosecuted, and before his death the work had been well nigh completed.

The necessity for building a new church arose from the fact that by process of law, the right to the old church passed into the hands of the church in connection with the Presbytery of West Virginia; and our people who assisted in erecting the old church not only lost their right to worship in it as their own, but they did not receive anything in the way of compensation for that loss.

Mr. Blair's ministry continued for about four years. In that time he endeared himself very much to the people. Whilst he preached regularly at Pt. Pleasant and Buffalo he also preached occasional in the Pleasant Flatts, and there gathered into the church some members. He labored fully up to his strength and in the opinion of some, far beyond it, often prostrating himself by his excessive labors. But this labor was not in vain in the Lord for during his ministry thirty two members were received into the church, of which number seventeen were added on examination. This, so far as we have been able to learn is the most successful pastorate this congregation has ever had.

On the 19th of June, 1871, the pastoral relation between this church and Rev. B. B. Blair, was dissolved, God having called him to a higher sphere, and the church was vacant until in the latter part of the same year, when an invitation was extended Rev. W. L. Bailey to supply it and Buffalo. He labored in this field very acceptably for one year, when having received an invitation to Augusta, Ky. in 1872, he went to that field where he remained for two years.

There were no additions to the church during Mr. Bailey's ministry in this field. In March, 1873 the present pastor commenced supplying this church and Buffalo and in February 1874 moved to this place and commenced preaching regularly at Bruce's Chapel, Mercer's Bottom, and in the churches in the Lower and Upper Flatts.

On the 3rd Sabbath of July, 1873, the new church was dedicated. The sermon was preached by Rev. W. L. Bailey. On the same day, was consummated the organization of a church in the Pleasant Flatts which was added to the roll of churches at the fall meeting of Greenbrier Presbytery, next ensuing. The pastoral relation between this church and W. F. Hill was formed on the 3rd Sabbath of March 1874, by Rev. J. C. Barr of Charleston appointed by Presbytery, with Rev. J. C. Brown and a ruling elder, a committee to discharge that duty. Since March 1872, twenty persons have been received into membership in this and Pleasant Flatts churches, eighteen of which number was on profession of faith.

Whilst we are not able to give the exact increase in membership of the church, we may have some idea of it by the following statement of facts:

The church was organized in 1835 with fourteen members.

In 1860 twenty members were dismissed to form the Buffalo church.

in 1866 the church was divided in Pt. Pleasant and there are now two Presbyterian churches in the place. About the same time a church of over twenty members was organized in the Upper Flatts, in connection with the Presbytery of W. Va. These were originally in connection with this church.

Since Buffalo was organized she has dismissed about forty members, to form Isabella and Mt. Zion churches, which were afterwards formed into Arbuckle church.

In 1872 two churches were organized in Pleasant Flatts out of material belonging originally to Point Pleasant Church.

We see from this statement that the one church, organized in 1835 with fourteen members, has increased to six organizations with about two hundred members.

At the date of its organization, 1835, there was no church edifice which we could call our own, in the bounds of the field; since that time seven churches have been erected, all of which are now occupied, save one, that has fallen into ruins.

Since its organization, the church has had seven ministers who preached regularly as pastors, or stated supplies. The average length of time they remained with the church is 5 5-7 years.

#### Roll of the Ruling Elders

Michael Wouns, sr., deceased; Michael Wouns, jr., removed; Robert Mitchell, deceased; Samuel Couch, removed; F. W. Martin, removed; Abney W. Hogg, deceased; Andrew Kincaid, James Capehart, deceased; M. H. Hale, L. F. Campbell, J. L. Hutchinson; J. D. Thompson, removed.

Thus have we given a brief history of this church.

*from copy loaned by Mrs. Eleanor McComb  
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