

# Jackson Township

Cambria County, Pennsylvania



## Chapter 15

Annals of Jackson Township

**Mrs. Betty Burkhart**  
**Nanty Glo Journal**  
**July 23, 1942**

### St. Paul's Lutheran Church

About the year 1859 when Rev. J. F. Kuhlman who was then pastor of the Jefferson mission (Summerhill), he became interested in the people of Lutheran faith in Jackson township and organized a group of thirty-five members and plans were made to erect a place of worship. Before 1856 Rev. Lewis J. Bell had preached occasionally for the group in the Burkhart school building, located about one mile from where the church was later built, but often local Lutherans would ride horseback or in wagons to the Jefferson mission. (Later, after the Pennsylvania Canal and Old Portage Railroad were completed the name of this place was changed to Halfway House, because of its location between the Summitt and Johnstown. Now the town is known as Summerhill).

However, on October 13, 1860 when the local group organized, a plot of ground was given for church and cemetery purposes by S. P. Dunmeyer and Mrs. Elizabeth Slonaker. The church was erected in the fall of 1861 and dedicated February 23, 1862. The building was erected at a cost of \$800, and has been in use since. From time to time additional ground has been deeded to the church and repairs have been made. We read in an old record: "In 1864, Lewis Dunmyre, because of natural affection to which said Dunmyre has toward the church," gave a piece of ground. In September of 1889 Rev. William Byers "deeded for the sum of one dollar" a piece of ground to the church. Jacob Paul, a first settler in this community and whose descendants to the fourth generation are worshippers at the local church, planed the lumber used by hand. He later died while serving in the army during the Civil War.

The church has been remodeled four times but it still remains much the same in outline. At first the place was heated by a single stove, which stood in the center aisle of the church, but later a stove was used at either side. In 1924, improvements were made and a furnace installed.

Adam Rorabaugh was one of the early members of this church whose descendants are still active participants. The Milton Funk family and Adam Vorhauer family, the John Miller family, and many others are among the original group whose descendants are still members. The Milt Funk family moved from this community to Conemaugh several years ago and joined a church nearer to their place of residence. A son, Rev. David Funk, is a minister in the Lutheran denomination.

Mrs. Clara (Rorabaugh) Custer of South Fork, one of the oldest members of the church, retains her membership here. Active members with the longest membership are Mrs. Ethel (Paul) Wilson and Mrs. Matilda (Miller) Paul. George Slonaker, father of Mike Slonaker was an early member of this church. He owned a large farm, part of which was later owned and occupied by the Steve Long family and which is now owned by a water

company.

The following are the ministers who have served this church and the time of their pastorate: J. F. Kuhlman, 1859-1860; P. Sheeder, 1864-1867; A. R. Height, 1867-1870; A. J. Harstock, 1870-1872; S. Croft M.D., 1872-1874; William Settlemire, 1874-1879; J. J. Kerr, 1879-1881; G. D. Gross, 1882-1883; P. G. Bell, 1883-1885; John Uruh, 1886-1888; M. O. T. Sahm; 1890-1893; A. B. Erhart, 1893-1897; G. K. Alien, 1897-1905; W. L. Leshner, 1907-1908; J. T. Fox, 1909-1910; G. D. Gross, 1910-1913; Fredrick Shultz, 1913-1935. Rev. R. B. McGiffin is now the pastor of the church.

### First Finnish Lutheran Church

The Finnish people first settled here about 1896 and in 1902 a group of men organized to form the Finnish Lutheran Church which is located on Johnson street in Nanty-Glo, which was then Jackson township. The customs of the church and their service of worship are Lutheran although they are not affiliated with other Lutheran churches, except those with the Finnish membership at other places. The first group was composed of 20 persons and their first house of worship was a sort of community house where the group transacted all their business relative to the denomination, held bazaars, and gave entertainments. When they had collected enough money and rebuilt the edifice in 1907 it was dedicated for religious services only. Rev. S. Ilmonen and Rev. A. Haapauen had charge of the services. There have been twenty-six pastors from time to time who have served here, and Rev. Viljo Ranta of Monessen is the pastor at the present time. The highest membership was eighty and at present there are thirty members. (Above Finntown, on Roberts St. the church has its cemetery, and over 100 of their departed members are interred there.}

### Evangelical Church

On August 24, 1872, Jacob Clinefelter (then spelled Klinefelter), deeded to the trustees of the Evangelical Church a piece of ground which was to be "used, kept, maintained and disposed of as a place of divine worship for the use of the ministry and membership of the Evangelical Church of America." The trustees were William Stevens, William Varner and Michael Kefer and the sum received was one dollar. This is part of the land "warranted in the name of James Williams," Mr. Clinefelter receiving it afterward. Before the church was built, religious services were held in the school building which has been mentioned elsewhere. The membership was much higher fifty years ago than it is today, the Clinefelter community then being much more thickly populated.

On April 14, 1884 the trustees, A.W Varner, Israel Dunmire and Augustus Link, members of the Evangelical Church of America, bought from Mrs. Catherine Layton, widow of Jacob Layton, for a small sum a parcel of land lying in the Clinefelter community near the Mt. Olive Church which was to be used as a cemetery. The little burial ground contains the graves of only four people, however, and many do not know of its existence.

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