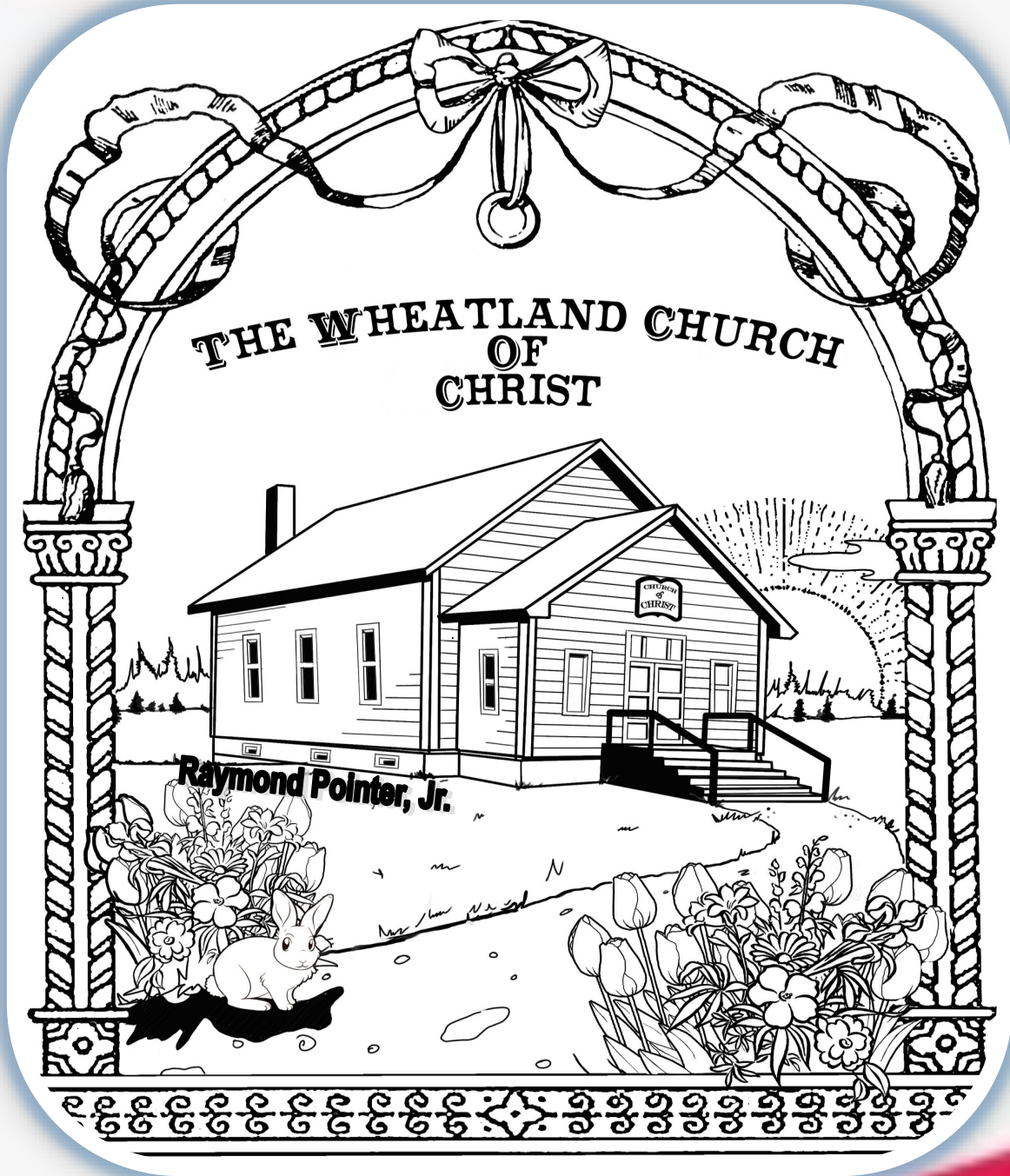


Remembering 150 Years



1869 - 2019

Celebrating
150
Years

Early Church History



Thomas W. Cross Family

Reading from left to right, standing --- Mary (Myers) Cross, Edward Cross, Elsworth Cross, Joseph Cross, Amos Cross, Catherine Jane Cross, John Cross, Theodosia (Guy) Cross. Sitting --- Thomas Ulysses Cross "holding son David," Catherine (Harper) Cross, Thomas William Cross, Joseph Lett "holding son Edward," Elizabeth (Cross) Lett. Below---- Mary Guy and Catherine Lett.

150 Years of Remembrance

History made us, and we are complete!

Wheatland Church of Christ (1869 - 2019)

"Omission of History" is probably worse than "Falsification of History". If history is falsified, at least it can be corrected.

Lest We Forget! This is the way it was back then. The following pages contained herein represents history remembered as it was when we grew up in Remus, Mecosta, Blanchard, Mt. Pleasant and surrounding areas. Pictures from the 100th, 125th, and 140th booklets published at the time were used to include Wheatland Church History in these brief 24 pages.

Some of the church members who grew up during the Civil Rights Era in Remus, MI did not realize what was really happening throughout the country. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Black folks were never mentioned by name in mainstream media. If a Black person did something newsworthy, it was printed as...The Negroes did something...whereas, Black people were mentioned by name only in Black media—*Jet and Ebony Magazines* nationally and in Detroit—*The Chronicle Newspaper*. It finally led to the “rude awakening” of what happened right here in Mecosta County where we grew up.

In looking at research articles, the town of Millbrook, MI reported, “There were many Negroes who settled in Millbrook”—no names—just a labeled category in the archives. We were left off the logging mural in Big Rapids, MI just this year when our ancestors like Joe Lett and his lumber camp, and the Art Skinner Lumber Camp were both ignored.

Russell Kirk of Mecosta referred to us in a book as “little known Negro Settlement.” We played a significant part in the county being settled with two state monuments at School Section Lake (Little River School House) and Wheatland Church of Christ; along with the Federally Recognized Site in Remus, but the visual impact leaves us OUTSIDE the scenario. We played a part in the original settlement of Remus. In 1879, Joseph Cummings built one of the first homes in Remus which was known by the names of Bingen or Buckshoey founded in 1877.

Wheatland Church of Christ (1869 - 2019)

It looks as if we had nothing to do with the founding and settlement of the area. In fact, it is recorded now that we did exist. Our ancestors are calling out to say, “If we don’t record our own history, it will disappear.” “A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin, and culture are like withering roots who soon disappear and die.”

Negro Folktales in Michigan by Richard M. Dorson (1956) (Little Known Negro Settlement)

Before the Civil War free Black men drifted into parts of Michigan along with captive slaves who fled through the Underground Railroad. Dorson described the people in his book as strange—the descendants of Negro pioneers. They were caught between cultures, thin of body, yellow in color, some could easily pass for white, and several showed discomfiture at any questions about their past. Beyond the family traditions, there were no visible links with Southern Negro culture. These Negro country folk believed in hoo-doo, spirits, and the literal word of the Bible, whose store of marvels were continually cited to underpin their own wondrous tales.

Dorson's friend Russell Kirk of Mecosta told him about the little-known Negro settlement around Mecosta. He goes on to write that the village of Mecosta lies in west-central Michigan in the heart of the cutover stump country. Negro landowners are scattered through Mecosta and neighboring townships, Remus, Millbrook and Blanchard. His task in reaching these outlying families has happily simplified through Russell's connections. Russel's uncle, the township supervisor of Mecosta, took him directly to Herschel Cross, a historically-minded member of a pioneer Negro clan. Silvery-haired and handsome, Herschel talked fluently on crops and farm problems. In the course of their visit he happened to mention a sister, Mertz Tate, who held a Ph.D. from Radcliffe, had published three solid books on international law, won a Fulbright Fellowship to India, lectured at the Sorbonne, and served on a UNESCO Committee. Yet she had been born and raised among these desolate sand barrens.

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OSRW
PO Box 275 – Remus, MI 49340**

Former Pastors



Arthur & Fern Cross
6/3/1939 – 4/27/1977



Theodore & Velma Weatherly
1977 - 3/22/1978



Randy & Pam Piatt
7/7/1992 – 10/1/2002



Bruce & Connie Killingbeck
7/7/1985 – 3/23/1992



Hiram & Shell Gates
10/1978 – 12/1978



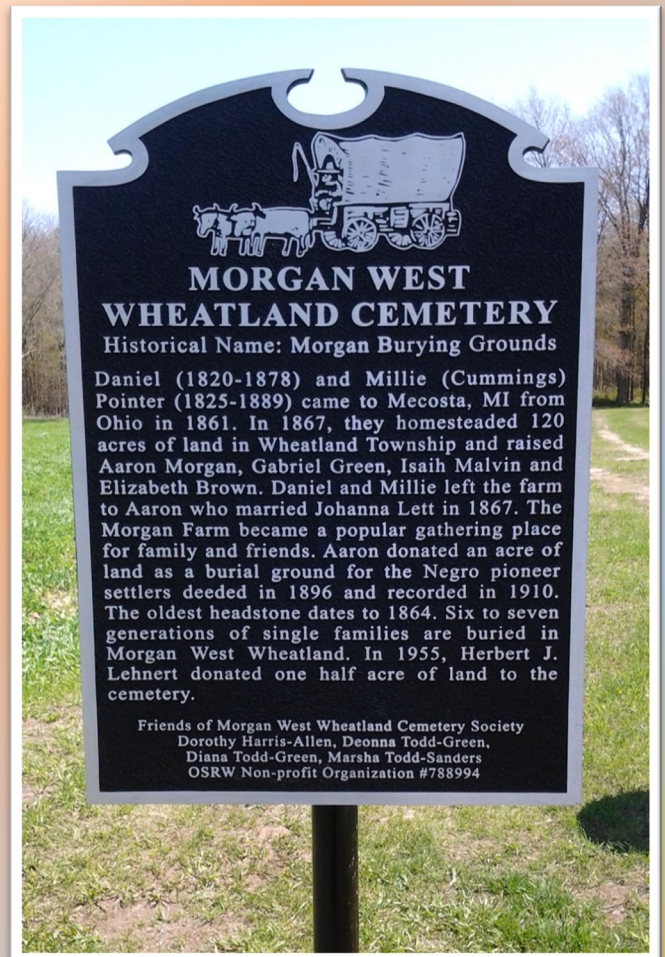
Henry & Lois Hawver
1/28/1979 – 9/1/1984



Earl & Charlene Scott
1/25/2003—10/03/2010

Wheatland Church of Christ Founders' Final Resting Place Cemetery Established 1864

Morgan/West Wheatland Cemetery is Federally Recognized since 2014 and listed in the National Register of Historical Places which are more than 100 years old.





1, 2, 3, 4, 5, George Norman, Arthur Cross, Amos Cross



**George Norman, Irvin Newman,
Roy Harris, Clifford Cross,
Amos Cross**



Church Meeting

Irma Guy's House

**Front: Oscar Norman,
Elmer Squires, Roscoe
Cross, Basil Mumford,
Stanley Sawyer, William
Norman, Amos Cross,
Arthur Cross**

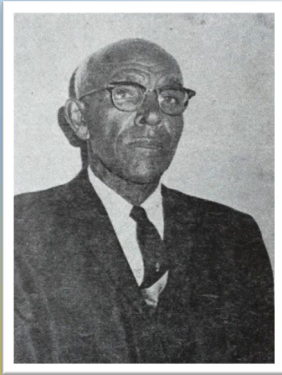
**Back: Charlie Green,
Otis Guy, Irving New-
man, Leo Mathews,
Junior Newman,
Johnny Squires, Lewis
Dawley, Duane Norman,
Jack Green**



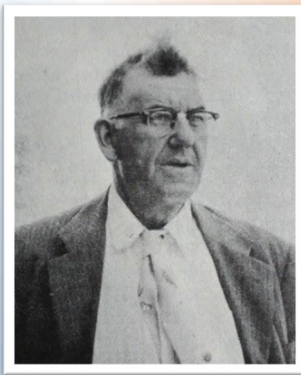
**William Mumford
Grace Mathews
Martha Johnson
Amos Cross
Mary Cross
Alonzo Johnson
Emma Todd
Thomas Courts
William Todd
Robert L. Jordan
Leo Mathews**



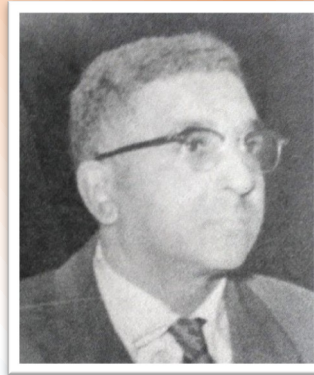
Wheatland Church Leadership



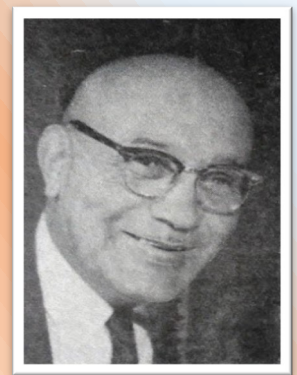
Hershel Cross
Elder



George Lindley Norman
Building Superintendent



Roscoe Cross
Soloist



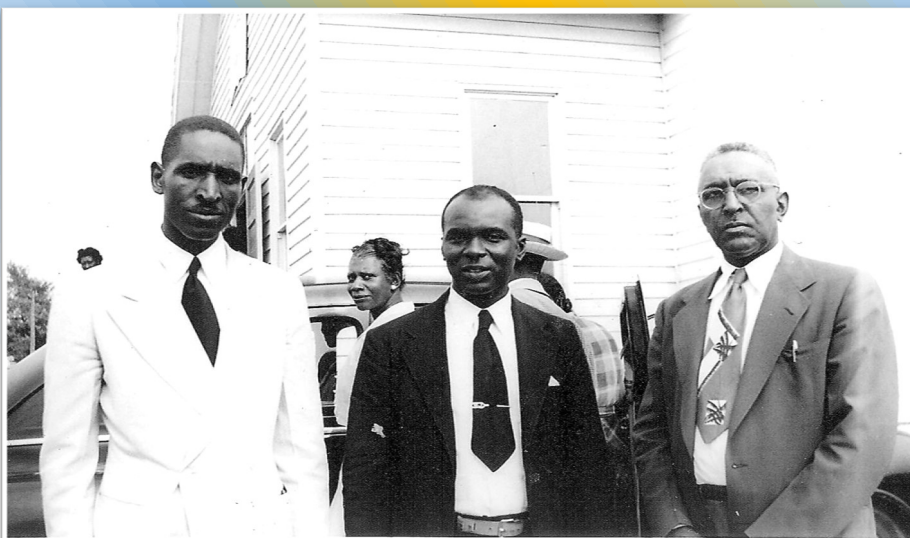
Homer Cross



**John Todd, William Todd, Emma Norman-Todd,
Unknown, Ida Bracy, Junior Newman, George Norman**



**Minnie Norman-Courts &
Rev. Thomas Courts**



UNON SERVICE DICIPLES OF CHRIST

**Thomas Courts (Vermont
Christian Church, Flint, MI),
Robert L Jordan (United
Church of Detroit, MI), & Arthur
Cross (Wheatland Church,
Remus, MI)**

World War II Parents & Wives of Service Members



**First Row L—R: Martha Johnson, Mr. & Mrs. George E. Norman
Caroline Cook, Paula Harris**

**Row Two: Irma Cook, Gladys Harper, Mr. & Mrs. Lewis Dawley
Molly Harper, Mr. & Mrs. Leslie Guy**

United Christian Church (Detroit) visits Wheatand Church (October 12, 1947)

According to the history, Emma Norman-Todd said: Some of the noted people who occupied the pulpit or paid visits during the years under the leadership of Arthur Cross were: Rev. Thomas Courts from Vermont Christian Church in Flint and Rev. R L Jordan of United Christian Church in Detroit.



**Robert L & Masie
Norman-Jordan
of Detroit United
Christian Church.**

**Front: Arthur Cross, Unknown, Rev. R L Jordan, George Norman,
George Lee Crawford,
Durward Todd & Charles Mitchell. Back row: Unknown Lady**



Adult Sunday School Class



Back Row: Arthur Cross, John Todd, Roscoe Cross, Herschel Cross G. Lindley Norman, Clifford Cross, Paula Norman, Irvin Newman,
Middle row: Thomas Cummings, Ida Mae Cross, Alta Mathews, Florence Green, Berth Johnson, Ruth Green, Lena Newman, Cynthia Cross
Seated: Caroline Cook, Mae Sleet, Christina Robinson, Ione Todd, Irene Norman, Martha Johnson, Lydia Guy

Sunday School Youth Class



Back L-R: Sandra Harris, Aldine Jackson, Charles Arthur Cross, Walter Holmes, Roger Cummings, Bonnie Harris Shirley Cross
Front L-R: George Crawford, Mary Cummings, Sharon Cook, Margaret Robinson, Betty Cummings, Gladys Harper—Sunday School Teacher

Sunday School Junior Class



Elizabeth Cummings (Sunday School Teacher), Evelyn Cross, Mary Smith, Beverly Johnson, Carol Norman, Karen Harris, Eileen Cross, Michael Smith

Toddlers & Middlers



Fern Cross Sunday School Teacher

Back Row: Nancy Johnson, Marlene Newman, Dorothy Harris, Opal Mathews, Marsha Todd, Janice Cook, Diana Todd, Deonna Todd

Front Row: Steven Newman, Helen Sleet, Janice Smith, Robert Johnson, Bradley Dean Cross, Lester Smith, Ronald Smith

Fern Johnson's Sunday School Class of 1929

**First Row: Ollie Johnson,
Jimmie Cross, Harry Norman,
Wilmer Norman**

**Second Row: Homer
Cross, Jr, A Mumford,
Buddy Johnson, Belle
Brown, William Norman**

**Third Row: Fern Johnson,
Thelma Johnson, June
Brown, Minnie Norman,
Marshall Todd,
Vernice Norman**



Paula Harris' Sunday School Class of 1945



Back Row: Paula Harris, Karen Harris, Marvin Todd, Willard Flowers, Doyle Green, Roger Harper, Betty Flowers, Donald Johnson, Robert Green, Bonnie Harris

Middle Row: Lillian Green, Barbara Johnson, Jack Harper, Jimmy Newman, Robert Todd, Marvin Todd, Josephine Green

Front Row: Alvin Norman, Sandra Harris, Connie Todd, Walter Todd, Doreen Flowers, George Crawford, Jimmy and Jerry Todd, Carolyn Green, Grant Green, Delores Green

Church Baptism Lake Six - 1936



Front Row: Minnie Norman & Norma Todd

Center Row: Belle Brown & Caroline Norman

Back Row: Virgil Todd, Jr. Allen, Thelma Johnson & Eileen Norman



Church Choir



Back: Roscoe Cross, Paula Harris, Herschel Cross, Clifford Cross, John Todd, Gladys Harper

Front: Elizabeth Cummings, Caroline Cook, Mabel June Brown, Shirley Cross, Bonnie Harris, Ione Todd

Pianist: Lena Newman

1966 High School Church Graduation Ceremony

Judge John Letts, Arlo Guy,
Ione Todd, Dewey (Duke)
Green, Arthur Cross



Ione Todd & Janice Cook



Wheatland Church

High School
Seniors
presented with
Bibles



Ione Todd & Deonna Todd



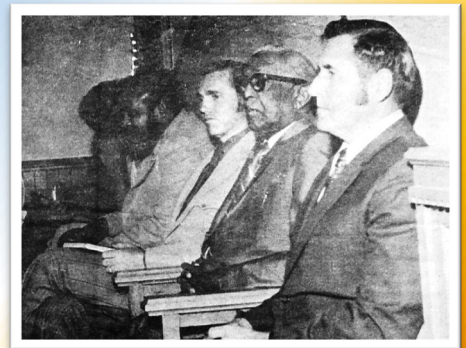
Ione Todd, Diana Todd—Glen
Norman Back

Janice Cook
Glen Norman
Dorothy Harris
Deonna Todd
Diana Todd



Baptistry Dedication

Wheatland Church of Christ held a Dedication for its new baptistry. The Baptistry Dedication Service was Sunday, June 11, 1972, featuring an 18-voice choir under the leadership of Mrs. Ann Schell. Mrs. Wilma Jones of Blanchard served as pianist, while Mrs. Dorothy Tice of Barryton was the organist. The speakers for the occasion were Larry Harden of Barryton, Arthur Cross, local pastor and Bob McCaul from the Coe church. Four persons were baptized in the new baptistry during the service, coming from Grand Rapids and Cassopolis, Michigan.



 *Dedication*

Ladies' Missionary Society



October 10, 1981—Back: Fern Cross, Yvonne Sumrell, Alta Mathews, Paula Harris, Caroline Cook, Connie Todd, Ida Mae Cross, Javelia Powell, Front: Helen Morgan, Deloris Todd, Lois Hawver, Lone Todd, Velma Weatherly

Wheatland church celebrates milestone



Members of Wheatland Church of Christ Senior Choir sing at the Aug. 1 11 a.m. service, which helped celebrate the church's 135th anniversary.

PIONEER/Chris Miller

Work of Thomas Cross continues after 135 years

August 1, 2004—Wheatland Celebrates 135 Years

William Todd Family Celebrates the 150th Year Anniversary



Will Todd selected Arthur Cross for Ordination and witness the service. Mrs. Emma Todd, the Church clerk, signed the Ordination certificate



Elder William Todd's standard verses recited each Sunday for the Lord's Supper.

1 Corinthians 11:24-25
When he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."



Durward Todd
Board Member

William (1882-1963) & Emma Norman-Todd (1887-1973)



Virgil Todd

PROPHECY (Often Recited During Church Services)

Written By WILLIAM TODD

Listen my friends while I relate the story of a man who died an awful death. He suffered the sins of the world you see, that was fulfilling the prophecy.

He cured the lame, the halt, sick and blind; he tried the hearts of all men to find. But of course you know that never could be, for it wouldn't have fulfilled the prophecy.

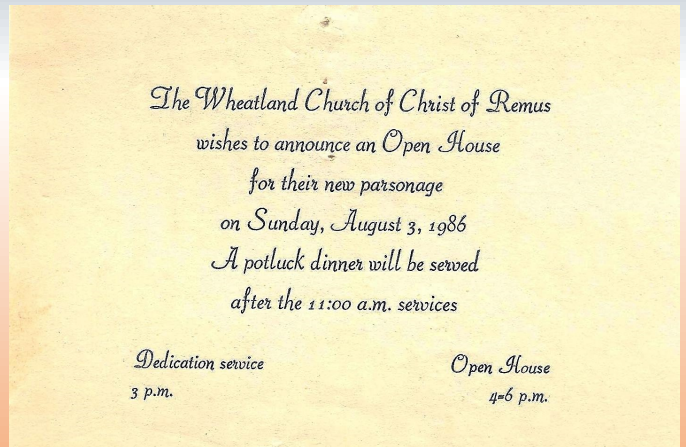
They took him and nailed him to an old rugged cross and lifted him high aloft, so the people could scoff and scorn at his agony that was fulfilling the prophecy.

They took him down and laid him in Joseph's new tomb, we've got him now they said, I presume, as they placed the Soldiers around the tomb to hold him there forever more. Now my friends, you can plainly see, that was fulfilling the prophecy.

Early in the morn, on the third day, the soldier's fell like dead, they say. For the Master spoke with a mighty roar, and angels came and rolled the stone from the door. Now my friends, you can farther see, that was fulfilling the prophecy.

Wheatland Church of Christ Parsonage Dedication Open House August 3, 1986

People who built the Wheatland Church of Christ Parsonage are listed Below: The Supervisors were Jay Cook & Hester Sumrell. The open house invitation for the new Parsonage is pictured, and a Certificate of Appreciation was given to each person who helped in building the parsonage.



Jimmy Todd

Betsy Todd

Jerry Todd

Marshall Todd

Grant (Buzz) Green

Carol Norman

Roger Cummings

Ken Todd

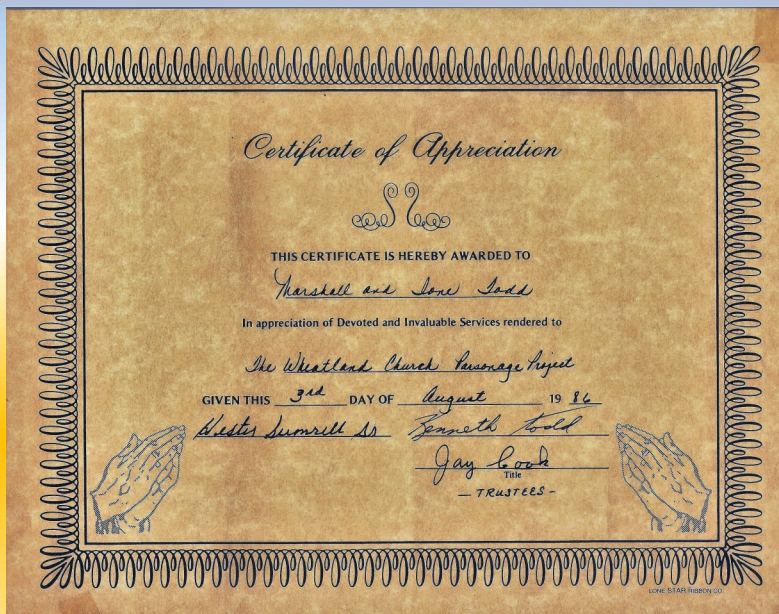
Walter Todd

Robert (Bob) Todd

Jack Todd

Larry Todd

Gary (Hank) Todd



Hester Sumrell, Roger Cummings, Jay Cook, Marshall Todd, Buzz Green

Ongoing History



This painting by Wilmer (Bert) Norman hangs in Wheatland Church of Christ. Wilmer, a lifetime member of the Church, was detained as a POW during the Korean War (1950—1953).

Thomas W. Cross was born in Virginia in the year of 1826 and came to Ohio in 1851. He met and married Miss Catherine Harper and established a home. In the year of 1869, along with a group of families, they migrated to Michigan, locating in Wheatland Township.

He found four disciples in these parts, and he, being accustomed to the work; having been a deacon in the church in Ohio, at once set about to organize and build up the work here, where primitive Christianity in the gospel purity and simplicity was altogether unknown.

In the fall of 1869, he held the first meeting in the Gingrich schoolhouse. In a short time, the congregation was organized with six members, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cross, his daughter Elizabeth, Mrs. Cynthia rice and Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Harper, Thomas Cross was appointed elder, and Mr. Harper, Deacon. Services were held for a while in the Gingrich Schoolhouse but later were changed to the Cross Schoolhouse which became the temporary meeting place for these Disciples.

As time passed, there arose the need for a more adequate building in which to worship. The men of the community proved themselves equal to the task and set about to erect the new structure. In a short time, the building was well under way. They encountered financial difficulties and lack of funds seemed to be due the only obstacle that would halt construction. Mr. Cross came to the rescue and furnished the needed money to complete the building, and in turn was to take a mortgage for his money. Some time later the debt was erased, mainly by the raising of funds to various wags by the ladies of the church and community, and the church was free from lien.

Throughout the early days, the church had its ups and downs, sometimes hope, faith and interest were high; and then again things were at a low ebb, but it managed to weather and continued to exist. Names that have been recorded as among the early laborers in the master's vineyard in the role of ministry were L.C. Griffith, Hale, Massey, Danes, Gardner, Rossell, Spade, Green, Judson Brown, B.D. Bright, John Grice, Mudge, Curch, Sias, Hawkins and Thomas W. Cross. Among the early membership of the church the following family names and many others are recorded: Hemminger, Nisonger, Lett, Guy, Lenon, Norman, Humphrey, Scott, Cummings and Harper.

Thomas Cross was ordained in 1876 by F. W. Hawkins, and Joseph Lett was ordained a deacon the same year. Miss Abby Fields introduced the Missionary society and its work here in 1890. One part of the record tells of Bro. Barr and Bro. Myers being active n the work here. The records show the organization of Sunday School in 1898 with Leonard Guy as president, N.C. Myers as assistant, Chas. Barr and John Myers as teachers, and Hadie Myers as secretary.

All was not sunshine, however, in these early days of the church. As time was taking its toll, death frequently visited and thinned the ranks of those early settlers, casting a gloom over the settlement. We learn from the records that Mrs. Thomas Cross, wife of Elder Cross, passed away in 1892 with Elder Bright officiating at the Funeral service. Mary E. Myers passed on the same year. Elder Thomas Cross passed away in 1897 with L. C. Griffith in chare of the funeral service. Thomas Harris also passed away the same year. Time marched on, however, and we find others taking up the work and the church kept moving.

Mr. John Cross, Mrs. E. A. Harris, and others were active in this period of the work. The church was without a spiritual leader and seemed at a standstill, when p from Kimberling Hts., TN, came a student preacher by the name of B.F.W. Pittman. He had charge of the work here for a short time and the spirit was renewed, and the church was on the move again. School work called Bro. Pittman back to college, and the church was again without a minister. Bro. Boardman, another Johnson bible Student preached here for a short time, but he too was called back to school.

After completing his school term, Pittman came to us again, this time remaining several years. He was away once more, returning in 1932 to continue the work until his death in 1935. Bro. Pittman worked hard and faithfully, leading many to Christ during his ministry. His untimely death brought sorrow to many friends here. J. Frank Green officiated at the funeral rites held at Bailey, Michigan.

In the absence of a pastor, elders and deacons kept the church in order until Walker Otto came to this community. After a brief and successful ministry he moved away; after which Arthur Cross, Alonzo Johnson, and Amos Cross took charge of having Communion Service and Sunday School each Lord's Day. They alternated in bringing the gospel messages. In 1939, the congregation upon the request of Bro. Will Todd, selected Arthur Cross for ordination to the ministry and to take full charge of the work. He was ordained June 3, 1939, by H. E. Curch of Mt. Pleasant, Amos Cross, Geo. Norman and W. Todd witnessed the service and Mrs. Emma Todd, Church Clerk, signed the ordination certificate. Arthur Cross, now in his 31st year as minister to the congregation, enjoys a fine spirit of cooperation in the church and community in building up the work here.

Some of the noted speakers who have preached here during his ministry are R. L. Jordan of Detroit, Thomas W. Courts of Flint, Larry Beard and Andy McNees of Barryton, and Milton Ken; Tibbs Maxey of Louisville, KY, Lieu. Vincent Hall of Jamaica; Ill Gates of Bailey; O.A. Trinkle of Alma; Glenn Hall of Vestaburg; Homer Cross of Grand Rapids; C. H. Walters of Macy, IN; C. Watterworth of Battle Creek and many, many more.

In our endeavor to build for Christ in this community we follow the time worn pattern, "In faith unity, in opinions liberty and in all things love." We rejoice for the victories won since the work began here 100 years ago, in August of 1869.

Plaque Dedication Fern Cross at the Podium Below: Marvin Lett

