
Cedarville, Ohio, Historical Information

1909

1809-1909 Centennial Souvenir

Reformed Presbyterian Church

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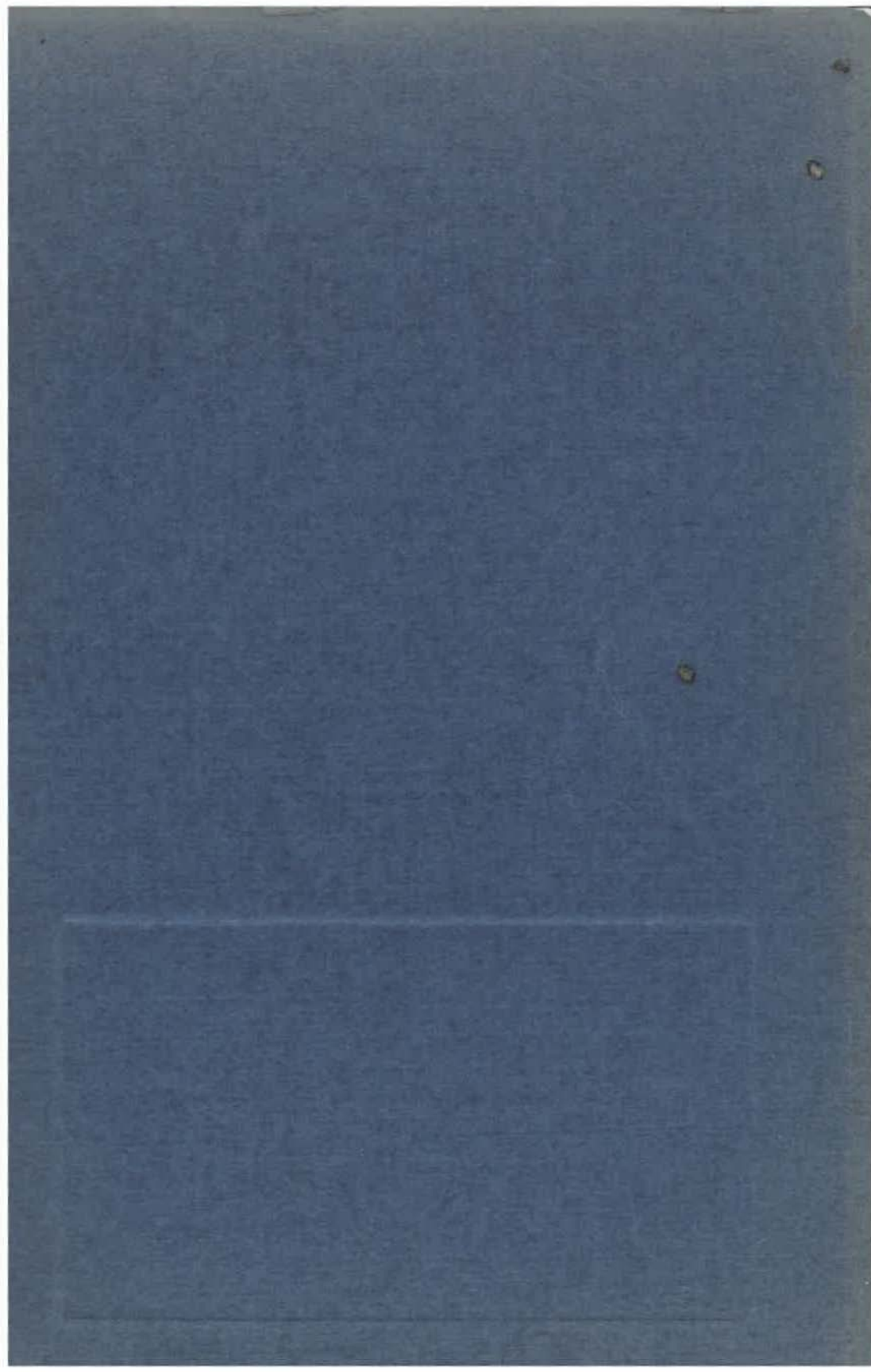
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1809

1909

CENTENNIAL
SOUVENIR



Mary J. Wilson

Lebanon College



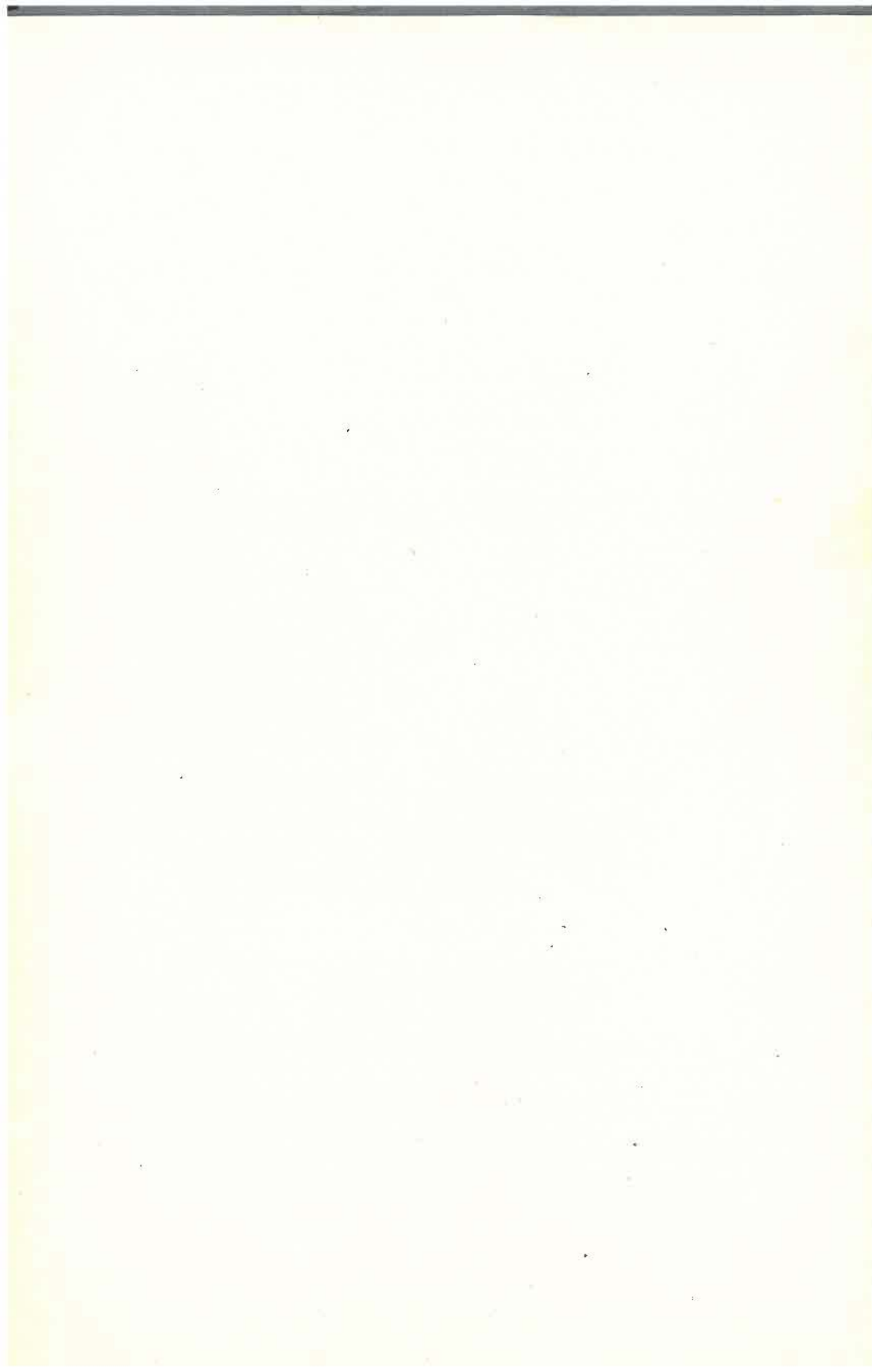
1809

1909

Centennial Souvenir



Cedarville Congregation
Reformed Presbyterian Church
(General Synod)



CENTENNIAL COMMITTEES

Program and Correspondence

Prof. W. R. McChesney
Rev. Mills J. Taylor
S. C. Wright

Wm. Conley
N. L. Ramsey
Prof. F. A. Jurkat

Mary Murdock

Music

Geo. H. Creswell

Sadie Iliffe

Lillie Stewart

Souvenir

Prof. F. A. Jurkat
Rev. Mills J. Taylor

Wm. Conley
S. C. Wright

Finance

Wm. Conley
A. H. Creswell

John A. Harbison
J. H. Stormont

Entertainment

The Ladies' Aid Society

CHURCH DIRECTORY

REV. MILLS J. TAYLOR, - - - *Pastor*

Elders

H. H. McMillan	J. C. Stormont
J. H. Creswell	N. L. Ramsey
E. L. Stormont	G. C. Hanna

W. H. Creswell, *Clerk*

Trustees

J. A. Harbison, - - - - -	<i>Chairman</i>
W. A. Collins, - - - - -	<i>Secretary</i>
Wm. Conley	Geo. Creswell
T. R. Spencer	J. W. McCollum

Congregation

E. L. Stormont, - - - - -	<i>Chairman</i>
J. A. Harbison, - - - - -	<i>Vice Chairman</i>
Prof. F. A. Jurkat, - - - - -	<i>Secretary</i>
W. W. Creswell, - - - - -	<i>Treasurer</i>

Sabbath School

Prof. W. R. McChesney, - - - - -	<i>Superintendent</i>
E. L. Stormont, - - - - -	<i>Vice Superintendent</i>
Miss Mary Cooper, - - - - -	<i>Secretary</i>
Miss Mary J. Ramsey, - - - - -	<i>Treasurer</i>

Christian Endeavor Society

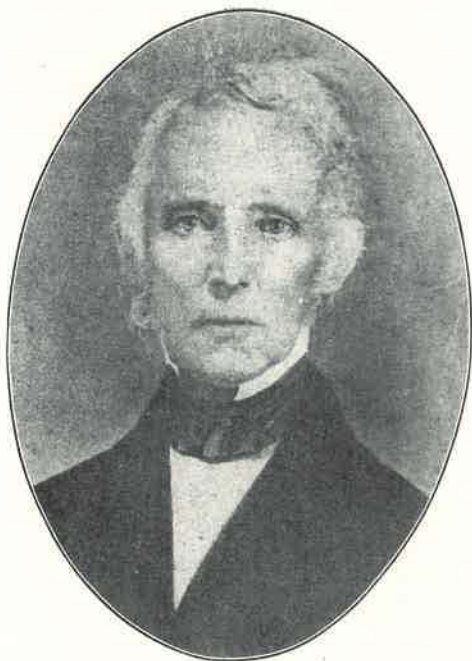
Rev. M. J. Taylor,	- - - - -	<i>President</i>
David Brigham,	- - - - -	<i>Vice President</i>
Agnes Stormont,	- - - - -	<i>Secretary</i>
Ralph Hill,	- - - - -	<i>Treasurer</i>

Ladies' Aid Society

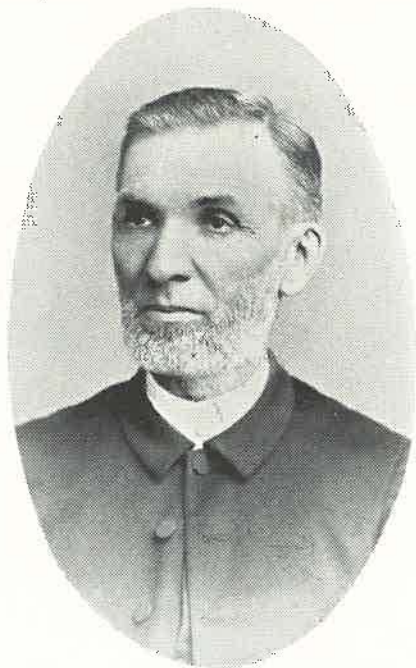
Mrs. W. R. McChesney,	- - - - -	<i>President</i>
Miss Ada Stormont,	- - - - -	<i>Vice President</i>
Mrs. Mary McCorkell,	- - - - -	<i>Secretary</i>
Mrs. Nettie Harbison,	- - - - -	<i>Treasurer</i>

Women's Missionary Society

Mrs. Louisa Iliffe,	- - - - -	<i>President</i>
Mrs. M. J. Taylor,	- - - - -	<i>Vice President</i>
Miss Martha McMillan,	- - - - -	<i>Recording Secretary</i>
Mrs. W. A. Collins,	- - - - -	<i>Corresponding Secretary</i>
Mrs. S. T. Baker,	- - - - -	<i>Treasurer</i>



HUGH McMILLAN, D.D.



J. F. MORTON, D.D.



REV. A. B. HENRY



REV. MILLS J. TAYLOR



PROF. W. R. MCCHESENEY, PH.D.

THE COVENANTERS

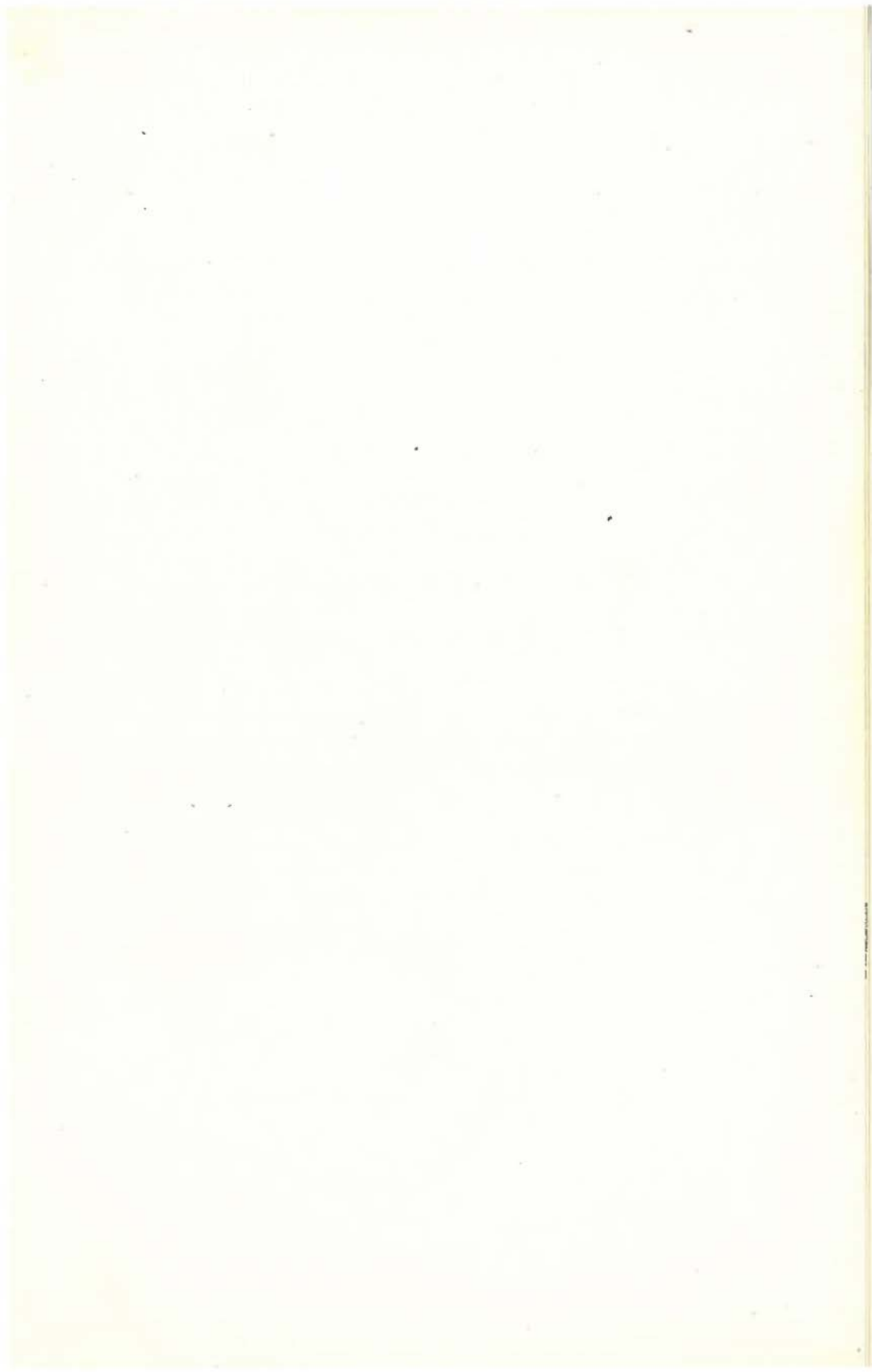
BY WILBUR D. NESBIT

You cannot understand us, you folk of changing creeds,
Who weave a changing fabric to fit tomorrow's needs;
You cannot understand us; the path is rough and high
And you would turn out from it to smoother ways near by.

But through the clash and clamor of your disputing words
We hear the olden sayings of them that tended herds,
And when the ancient dogma you hold of small account
We hear the primal message that thundered from the mount.

A covenant we cherish — a covenant of old;
A covenant first fashioned where Jordan's waters rolled;
It throbbed from David's harpstrings by the eternal plan,
Unchanging and unceasing — the covenant with man.

They cannot understand us, the folk of changing creeds
Who weave a mingled fabric to fit tomorrow's needs —
But we have seen tomorrows grow from the yesterdays
While man-made creeds have faded into the distant haze.



CEDARVILLE CONGREGATION

The chief historical authority on the Cedarville congregation to the time of the Civil War was Robert Charlton Reid, father of the honorable Whitelaw Reid, and for forty years an elder of the congregation and clerk of the session. From his memoir of the congregation the following facts are gathered:

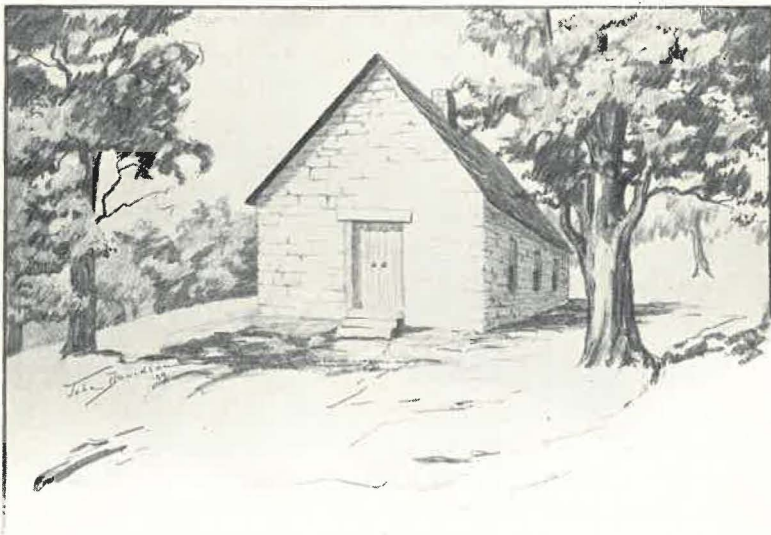
The history of Cedarville congregation begins in 1804. In that year David Mitchell and his wife Margaret emigrated from Kentucky and settled on Clark's run, six miles from Xenia. They were then well stricken in years and alone—their family being all married and mostly in the Associate church. About the same year James Miller and his wife Elizabeth, from Scotland, settled in the neighborhood of Mr. Mitchell, and these two families formed the first prayer-meeting of the future congregation, and were for some years the only members. Messrs. Mitchell and Miller had both been clothed with the office of ruling elder. The next family, that of Robert C. Reid's father, James Reid, settled in the same neighborhood in the spring of 1808. They had been members of the Associate Reformed church in Lexington, Kentucky, but left that church because slavery, the giant evil that divided some of the churches that tolerated it so long, was not only tolerated, but Rev. Adam Rankin, their pastor at Lexington, had himself become a slaveholder. Mr. and Mrs. James Reid, though without an opportunity as yet of being admitted into the fellowship of the church, were regular attendants with Messrs. Miller's and Mitchell's families in the prayer-meeting. In the fall of 1808 William Moreland and his family also settled in the Clark's run neighborhood and joined themselves to the same prayer-meeting. In the fall of 1809, Rev. Thomas Donnelly and Mr. John Kell, then a licentiate, passed through the neighborhood and preached—Mr. Kell in the morning and Rev. Donnelly in the afternoon. This was the first preaching that the embryo congre-



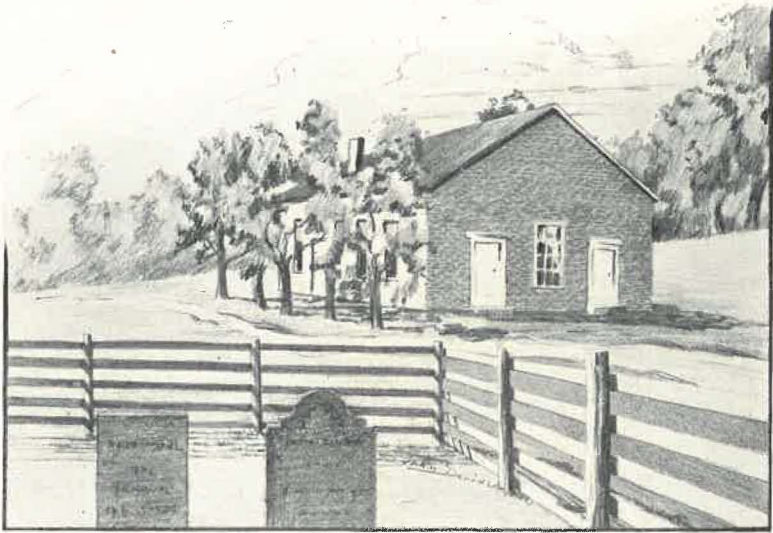
FIRST CHURCH

gation had, and the first Reformed Presbyterian preaching in the county, and so far as I know, in the state. Not long afterwards, Rev. John Black, of Pittsburg, Pa., visited the little society, constituted the session, and received James Reid and his wife as the first accessions to the church. There were now nine or ten adult members in the congregation. The next Sabbath, Rev. John Black preached in a hewed log barn on a farm near to Mr. Mitchell's, then belonging to his son-in-law, Mr. David Laughead, and later to Mr. Samuel Dallas, afterwards a member of the session for many years. On that day the sacrament of baptism was administered for the first time in the congregation; the subjects being Robert Reid's two youngest brothers, William and Joseph, who had been born after their parents had left the Associate Reformed church. In 1810, Gavin Johnson and Alexander Foster, with their families, settled in the congregation; and in the next few years, seven or eight other families were also added. All the preaching the congregation got, (and in those days it was very little indeed) had to be in the residences of the members, which were generally small log houses; or in barns, which latter were, in the summer season much more comfortable. In 1812 the congregation erected its first church edifice on Mr. Miller's farm, seven

miles from Xenia. It was about twenty-two feet square, was built of round logs, the cracks closed with clay, the floor planked without jointing or matching, and the roof of clapboards, four feet long, fastened on with "weight-poles." The house was warmed by a stone furnace, running from the outside, under the floor. This church was used as a place of worship for twelve years. The first regular preaching that the congregation enjoyed was by Rev. John Kell, who preached for them about one-fourth of his time, from 1810 to 1816. Rev. Jonathan Gill was then settled in the congregation, and continued with them until 1823, when, at his own request, the pastoral relation was dissolved. The congregation was small, and the members being mostly engaged in clearing up their farms, and as yet reaping little or no profit from their labors, were unable to give him an adequate support. A portion of the congregation had also become dissatisfied with Rev. Gill, some from one cause and some from another; and on all accounts, therefore, he thought it best to resign his charge. In conversation with Robert Reid he said that there were a few families in the congregation to whom he would gladly preach as



SECOND CHURCH

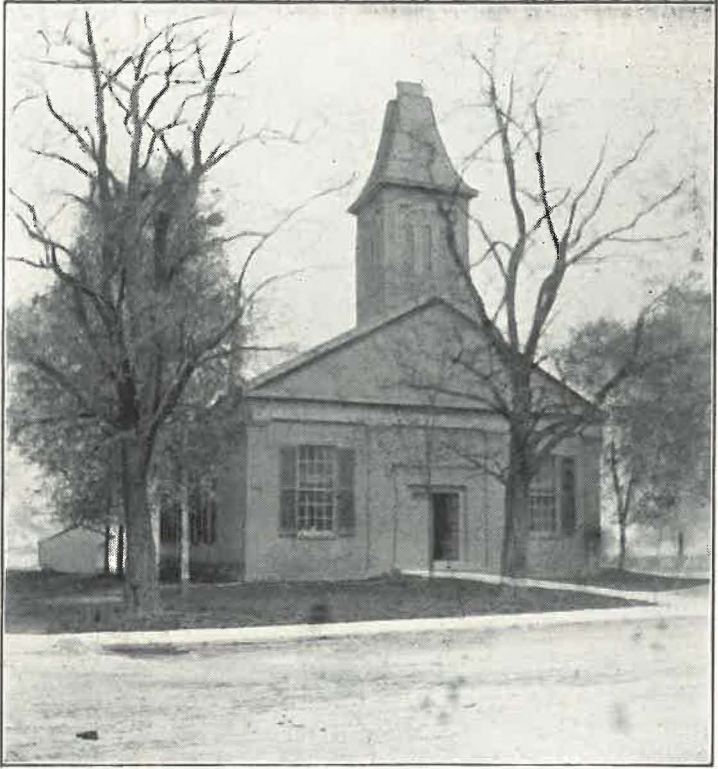


THIRD CHURCH

long as he lived if they could only give him enough bread and meat to support his family; but this he knew they could not do, and so he would resign. The congregation had not numbered over forty communicants at any time during this period. From 1823 till the spring of 1829, Rev. Gavin McMillan preached to them about one-fourth of his time. He also stirred them to build a more comfortable house for public worship, which was opened in 1824. It was erected on a lot two miles east of the old log church, six miles from Xenia and two miles from Cedarville, on the bank of Massie's Creek. It was of stone, forty feet long by thirty-six wide. In the fall of 1828, Rev. Hugh McMillan, on his return from Synod, assisted his brother Gavin to dispense the Lord's Supper in the congregation. They were greatly pleased with Mr. McMillan's service on the occasion; and understanding that he wished to remove from South Carolina with as many of his congregation as could accompany him, and settle in some of the free states, where there was already the beginning of a congregation; and understanding also, that he had expressed

some partiality for Ohio, as the first free state admitted into the Union, they gave him a unanimous call to become their pastor. He accepted the call, and in April 1829 returned from the South, and was soon afterwards installed over the congregation, whose beloved pastor he remained till his lamented death in October 1860. In 1829, when Rev. Hugh McMillan became the pastor of the congregation, there were but sixty-six communicants. Of those that subscribed the original call, there remained in the congregation in 1860 only three, Messrs. John, William, and Robert Reid. A goodly number of Mr. McMillan's people in South Carolina followed him, so that in a few years they formed the larger part of the congregation. In 1860 the Southern members, with their descendants, were still in the majority, not one of them being a sympathizer with secession. In 1833, at the time of the division, 38 of the 165 members went out with the Synod branch. The division caused some trouble about the occupancy of the church, which was however finally settled by allowing those who had left the congregation to use the church every fourth Sabbath; and when they had a communion, two Sabbaths together. During the time that the church was thus occupied, Mr. McMillan preached in Xenia one-fourth of his time. In 1839 the congregation purchased another lot of ground adjacent to the old one, and built thereon a new church, of brick, 45 by 55 feet, and allowed the other congregation to use the stone church all the time, if they wished or needed it. In 1848 the members living in Xenia and vicinity petitioned Presbytery for a distinct organization which was granted. The Xenia congregation took off fifty members. They immediately made a call upon Dr. McMillan, who was then living in Xenia, to become their pastor. After mature deliberation, however, he declined to give up his connection with the old congregation. He removed to Cedarville where he continued to reside till his work in the church militant was done and he was taken to his reward, October 9th, 1860.

In 1853 the congregation determined to pull down the brick church and rebuild it in Cedarville, that being a more central place after the members composing the new Xenia congregation had withdrawn. By this time the old stone church was not fit

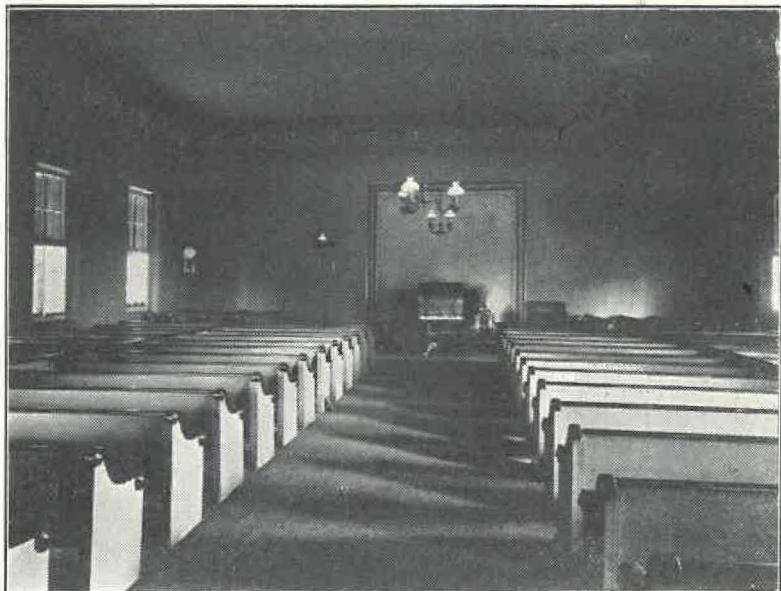


FOURTH CHURCH

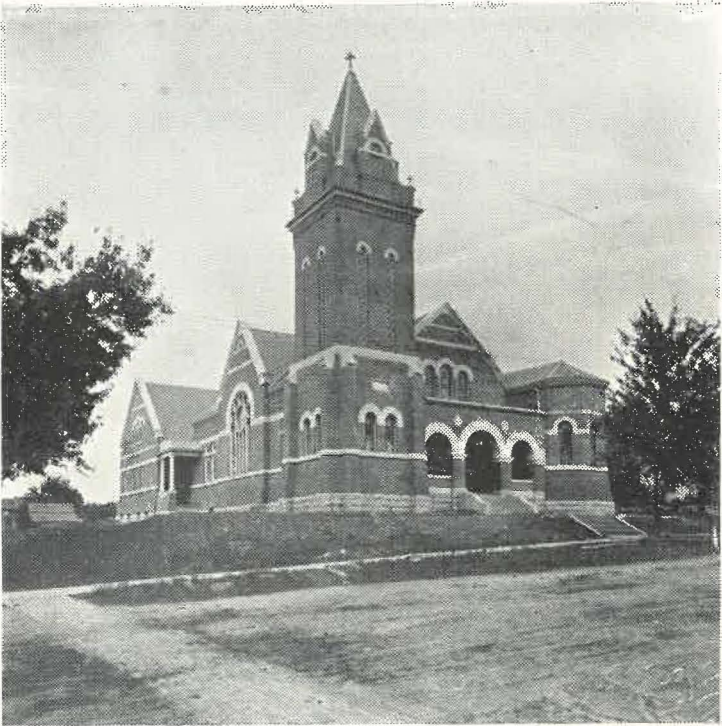
for use, and those using it, not thinking it the right place for them, gave up their interest to the others, and also its materials were used in the construction of the new edifice in Cedarville. Thus the fourth edifice has in it, materials from the old church of 1824, and also from that of 1839. It is of brick, 45 by 67 feet with a twelve-foot vestibule, and was finished inside with the same pulpit and pews that were in the former brick church erected in 1839. [This fourth edifice is the one that was purchased in 1902 by Mr. William Alford, and donated to Cedarville College as a gymnasium, receiving the name of Alford Memorial, in honor of his parents, Rev. and Mrs. John Alford.]

Mr. Reid concludes by saying that the congregation has seen both good and evil days; and that now they would set up their Ebenezer and say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us: we will still put our trust in Him, from this time forth, while we have being."

Dr. Hugh McMillan is given extended notice in Rev. James H. Cooper's History of the McMillans. From his biography there we note that he was born in Chester District, South Carolina, in February, 1794. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, and returning home, was elected Professor of Languages in Columbia College. Determining to consecrate himself to the ministry, he entered the Philadelphia R. P. Seminary, and in 1820 was licensed to preach. After doing missionary work from Ohio to South Carolina, he was ordained and installed pastor of Rocky Creek church, Chester District, S. C., in 1821. He was married in 1822 to Mary Ann McClurg of Pittsburg,



INTERIOR OF FOURTH CHURCH



PRESENT CHURCH

and was the father of three children, of whom two died in infancy.

He was a man of great vigor and ability. His antipathy to slavery soon made his location untenable, and as previously stated, he emigrated to Greene county with nearly all his congregation. As a religious leader, he exerted an influence which has impressed itself ineradicably upon the character of the people. His fame as an educator was wide-spread. For many years he conducted an academy where young men were prepared for college, or directly for active life. He was a professor in the R. P. Seminary at Philadelphia, and a trustee of Miami University. He died with his armor on, and was buried in Massie's Creek cemetery, on the very spot where his pulpit had stood.

Mr. Reid, writing at the time of the vacancy, expressed the hope and belief that the Great Head of the Church would in his own good time send them another such pastor, whose labors would be in like manner blessed among them, and who would long feed them with knowledge and understanding.

How well this hope was realized will be patent to anyone who was a member of the congregation during the pastorate of Dr. Morton. His incumbency began in 1863 and lasted forty years. He was born in Tennessee, January 18, 1828, the family removing to Illinois when James F. was thirteen years old. He spent his early manhood in teaching, as a stepping-stone to something higher. He entered Monmouth College in 1859, graduated there in 1861, and from the Seminary in 1862, and shortly afterwards went to Cedarville. Brief annals are a sign of happiness, and this was particularly true of the two score years during which he guided the destinies of the congregation. In June, 1863, he was married to Martha Blair, of Sparta, Illinois, and



INTERIOR OF PRESENT CHURCH

six children blessed their union, of whom four grew to maturity.

During Dr. Morton's pastorate, the congregation enjoyed the steady growth that characterizes a mature organization. Two of the most notable events were the founding of Cedarville College, and the building of the fifth church edifice. Cedarville College, chartered in 1887, opened its doors in 1894 under the auspices of the R. P. General Synod. Started primarily to furnish theological students, it soon proved a valuable help in the local religious work of the congregation and has since maintained that position steadily.

The present church building was begun in 1901 and dedicated in 1902, at a cost of \$22,000, seven times as much as the cost of the preceding one. The present is indicated by the modern structural design, while as links with the past are the memorial tablet to Dr. Hugh McMillan, the memorial window to Dr. Morton, and the memorial window to Robert Charlton Reid, presented by his son, the Hon. Whitelaw Reid.

After the death of Dr. Morton, May 31, 1903, the pulpit was vacant for a year, during which time Rev. Prof. W. R. McChesney, of the College, performed the duties of pastor. Rev. Albert Barnes Henry, the next pastor, was born and reared in Kansas, and secured his preliminary education in the public and high schools of Clay Center. After teaching school a year he entered Monmouth College, where he was graduated in 1896. He was graduated from the Philadelphia Seminary in 1900, ordained by Philadelphia Presbytery, and placed in charge of the Second R. P. church of that city. His pastorate in Cedarville lasted from 1904 to 1906, being terminated by a call from the Kensington Presbyterian church of Philadelphia. Again Prof. McChesney was placed in pastoral charge, this time for two years. Rev. Mills J. Taylor, the present incumbent, was born in Reeseville, Ohio, May 6, 1879, removed to Iowa, where he attended school and academy, graduated from Monmouth College in 1905, and from Xenia U. P. Seminary in 1908, and was ordained by the Washington Presbytery. He was installed in Cedarville, September, 1908. He was married to Martha Dill, June 11, 1908.

The congregation today has about 230 members. The

auxiliary societies spread the influence of the church much more widely. The Sabbath School, once looked upon with suspicion, has become prosperous, and boasts 170 members. The old feeling of distrust at the introduction of innovations, and of anger at the laying aside of ancient relics, has been relegated to oblivion. The precentor and the token are no more, and while the fast day and the communion table can be seen only with the mind's eye, we hope that the spiritual is triumphant over that which is seen, and that the banner of the covenant will continue to wave, victorious over the hosts of evil.

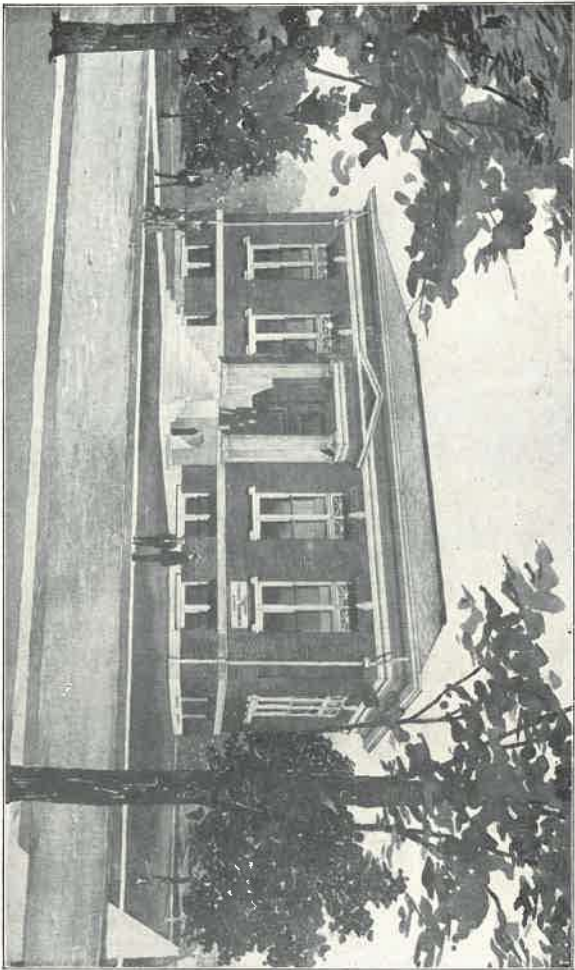


CEDARVILLE COLLEGE

Among the ministers sent out from this congregation may be mentioned G. Riley McMillan, John McMillan, Robert McMillan, Homer McMillan, Jason McMillan, William Bratton, Harvey Reid, Daniel C. Cooper, James H. Cooper, Samuel R. Stormont, David Murdock, John Kendall, Robert Galbreath, Riley Little, Milton Hanna, Wallace Iliffe, Clarence Young, Alvin Orr, and Frank Orr.

THE COVENANTERS

The Covenanter is a monument of the Reformation in Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Four centuries ago the Roman Catholic Church held sway as a world power, although that power was antagonized by both kings and people in Northern Europe. Nowhere was this antagonism more pronounced than in the island of Great Britain. It may seem strange that Protestantism in England took the form of Episcopacy, while in Scotland the prevailing system was Presbyterian. The explanation is simple. The English Reformation was taken in hand by the sovereigns and made over into a state church, the King being the head. It was virtually the Catholic church with a pope at London instead of at Rome. The English Puritans and Independents who later fought under Cromwell and the Parliament never constituted a real majority of the nation, and only under exceptional circumstances did they get control of affairs. In Scotland it was different. The Scotch Reformation was a popular movement. Refugees returning from Calvin's theocratic republic at Geneva disseminated Calvin's theology and Calvin's presbyterian system of church government, and had gained considerable headway by the time that Mary Stuart resolved to crush the movement. The Scotch nobles responded with the National Covenant which effectually stopped the persecution for over half a century. Then came the political struggle with Charles I. Not content with trying to destroy the civil liberties of England, he tried to force Episcopacy upon Scotland. This brought on the Solemn League and Covenant of 1638, ratified by the Parliaments of England and Scotland, and also by the Westminster Assembly of 1643, according to which Presbyterianism was to be maintained in the Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and popery

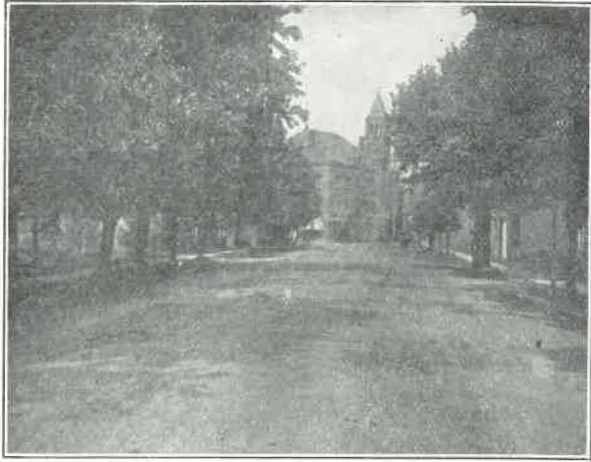


CARNEGIE LIBRARY

and prelacy were to be extirpated. In opposition to the theory that the church is the creature of the state, and that the King is head of the church, they maintained that the Lord Jesus Christ is the head of nations, and vowed not to rest until this principle and those which flow from it should be acknowledged throughout the length and the breadth of the earth. Thus at this early day the Covenanters had a vision of church unity which has not yet become a reality.

Cromwell and the Commonwealth were followed by the Restoration of the Stuarts, during which epoch Episcopacy was re-established and the Solemn League and Covenant was set aside. The Scotch, however, held fast to the old doctrine and covenant, and finally in 1680 the bloody persecution commenced. It was then that Richard Cameron, from whom the Scotch Covenanters were afterwards called Cameronians, issued the Sanquhar Declaration, formally renouncing allegiance to the tyrant and declaring war against him and his adherents. His followers were scattered and he took his place among the Scotch martyrs. Over twenty thousand Presbyterians were killed during the reigns of Charles and James, among them the Rev. Donald Cargill, who had excommunicated the King. Not a minister was left to ordain a possible licentiate, and James Renwick, who offered himself, had to go to the Church of Holland to be ordained. After six years of labor, he too was executed, the last martyr to the covenanted reformation.

The Revolution of 1688 stopped the bloody persecution, and as a measure of pacification, Presbyterianism was established in Scotland by Act of Parliament in 1690, but it was of a modified kind, countenancing the Erastian doctrine of the Revolution Settlement that the church is a mere creature of the state, dependent upon it for its existence and authority. The great majority of Presbyterians accepted the Settlement, thus establishing the Kirk of Scotland, but the Cameronians, or Reformed Presbyterians, as they called themselves, could not forget the Solemn League and Covenant, and maintained that the ends thereof had not been attained. For sixteen years there was not an ordained minister in the church, or only one. The congregations, or Societies, as



XENIA AVENUE LOOKING EAST FROM MILLER STREET

they were called, held together, however, in the hope of brighter days to come, and finally, in 1706, Rev. John McMillan acceded to the Societies from the Presbyterian church. In 1743 he and Rev. Thomas Nairn reconstituted the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland. Fifty years before, some had emigrated to Ireland and formed a strong religious community there, which was now also erected into a presbytery.

“From the middle of the seventeenth century, there had been an emigration from the Reformed Presbyterian churches in Scotland and Ireland to the then American plantations or colonies. Many of these Covenanters had been actually banished by the persecutor, and many more were voluntary exiles for the Word of God and the testimony which they held. They came at first by way of Charleston to the Carolinas, and thence spread themselves through Tennessee and Kentucky; and by way of Philadelphia, and distributed themselves over the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia; while at a later period they landed in New York, and passed by the Hudson to its Northern and Western localities, or remained to aid in building up the rapidly growing towns and cities on the Atlantic seaboard. In 1752 Rev. John



VIEW OF CEDARVILLE CLIFFS

Cuthbertson arrived from Scotland, and for twenty years labored alone among the scattered people." The Reformed Presbytery of America was constituted in 1774, and dissolved during the Revolutionary war for lack of ministers. Twenty years later, the arrival of four ministers from the home churches led to the reorganization of the Presbytery in 1798. In 1806 this body ratified the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian church in the United States of America, previously prepared by a committee. The Presbyteries of Scotland and Ireland now raised themselves to the rank of Synods, and to avoid the anomaly of a seeming but otherwise unavoidable subjection to either or both of them, the American Presbytery also constituted itself the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States of North America, which became a delegated body in 1823.

The enforced complicity of the Northern States with slavery in the matter of the return of fugitive slaves, brought up the question of the rightfulness or wrongfulness of a church member's taking part in civil affairs, and led to a division of the

church in 1833, those opposing participation, called Old Lights, taking the name of Synod Reformed Presbyterians; while their opponents, the New Lights, took the name of General Synod. The Theological Seminary of the General Synod was founded in 1807 at Philadelphia, and the College at Cedarville, Ohio, chartered in 1887, commenced operations in 1894. The foreign mission work of the General Synod began in India in 1836. There is one presbytery in India, and four in America, the Philadelphia, the Pittsburg, the Ohio, and the Western.

It is a far cry from the time when the Covenanters were pursued o'er bog and fen by the troopers of Claverhouse, but in spite of distance in time, and removal from the ancient battleground, they still have a reason for existence, for the oath of the covenant will not be fulfilled until the Kingdoms of this world shall have become the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.



BOYHOOD HOME OF WHITELAW REID

