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THE WISCONSIN METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WISCONSIN CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

April 27, 1937

Dear Mr. Heller,

What a grand visit we had yesterday, did we not? In my excitement, I forgot to ask how far back the records of the local M.E. Church went, also what is the basis for thinking the church was built in 1840?

Last evening I went into the matters again, in the light of our conversation, regarding the question as to how the Methodists got in. I find a line saying that H.W. Frink, in his first circuit, 1837, included Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Two Rivers, Brothertown and Port Washington. ^{in 1838} Deansburg and Fond du Lac, To be supplied. ^{Washington} ~~and~~ under 1839 that J. Halstead was appointed to Deansburg, but spent some time in Oneida, in 1840 the charge was called Fond du Lac, but included Brothertown, and in 1841 he was appointed again to Brothertown, with an additional preacher To be supplied. H.W. Frink came back for 1842, 43, 44, but before that Conference year was out, in April, 45 he had to leave and young Wesson G. Miller was sent, although only an Exhorter. As he is the author of the first history written, Thirty Years in the Itinerancy, he goes into great length about his first experience. A.D. Dick, Esq. one of the stewards, was his host, also was one of the best singers, along with Jeremiah Johnson, Orrin Johnson, and Thomas Cummock. Class meeting was held under the leadership of Father Abner. Young Lewis Fowler was spoken of highly, but he died of consumption soo after. Several of these went to a Camp Meeting at Clason's Prairie, and in July several preachers came to Brothertown to help in a meeting there. 1842
~~1842~~ Of the settlement he says, "The Brothertown people came from the State of New York, and had now been settled in their western home several years. A log chapel had been erected, and school houses provided. The location along the eastern shore of Lake Winnebago was excellent affording a good soil and water and timber in abundance. Along the principal highways the farms had been cleared of timber and brought under a fair state of cultivation. The buildings were mainly constructed of logs, though in later years, there had been erected a goodly number of frame residences".

"The chapel was constructed of logs. These were hewn on both sides, thus giving a smooth

appearance both within and without. The logs were halved together at the ends, and filled between with small pieces of wood laid in mortar, and on the whole, the chapel made a very respectable appearance. It contained rude seats that would accommodate about one hundred and fifty persons, and furnish standing room in addition for one hundred more."

" But the time had come in the history of the Mission when a new and larger chapel must be erected. To further this object, several boxes of goods had been forwarded to the Mission by Ladies Benevolent Societies in the East. They were accordingly opened out in the vacant rooms of the Parsonage. (Mr. Frink and family had gone, and Miller was unmarried and only there temporarily, anyhow. E.W.) They were accordingly opened out, and when not otherwise employed, I installed myself as a salesman of merchandise."

" A man in Stockbridge who owned a fine grove of timber, proposed to give a certain amount of it for the church provided the church people would cut it. And it was further found that the owner of a mill in the vicinity would give the sawing. Word was passed among the people, and on a given day, a score or more of men and teams, with the Missionary among them, made an onslaught upon the timber. In a few days the task was accomplished and the success of the enterprise guaranteed".

1845 and 1846 were served by H.R. Colman, and 1847-48 by Henry Requa. Of the latter P.S. Bennett wrote in his history "At Brothertown, H. Requa succeeded in the erection of a framed church edifice, in place of a log building previously used as a place of worship. This and those at Green Bay and Oneida were the only ones in the entire District at the close of the year."

Then, your 1839 session must have been in the old log church. I shall keep on the look out for anything bearing upon any parts of this fascinating subject, and trust you will tell me anything you forgot yesterday, and that I may see you and Mrs Heller here at some time.

Most gratefully,

Elizabeth Weston