



'SEWING CIRCLE' CHURCH—The South Gouldsboro Evangelical Church, built and operated through the efforts of interested citizens, has spiritual and social needs of the community for over 50 years. (C)

South Gouldsboro Church A 'Sewing Circle' Idea

By JONAS CRANE

SOUTH GOULDSBORO, Aug. 14—The South Gouldsboro Evangelical Church, which might well be called "the Sewing Circle Church," has served the community for more than 50 years. This building, which down through the years has served the spiritual needs of the village, was built as the result of an idea and a lot of hard work by Mrs. Joan Sargent and Mrs. Sarah Bunker. Both of the ladies are now deceased, but the church they started is still an active force in South Gouldsboro.

Sewing Circle Helps

When the two women got the idea for starting a fund to build a church, the only public building in South Gouldsboro was a small schoolhouse. But the village did have an active sewing circle that was affiliated with the Winter Harbor Baptist Church. In a short time the sewing circle, and most of the village, were working with Mrs. Bunker and Mrs. Sargent to get enough money to buy lumber for the proposed new church.

Ice cream socials were held in the little schoolhouse and quilts, aprons, and pot holders made by the circle members were sold along with the ice cream. Lobster and clam stews, and baked bean suppers were put on by the ladies, while the men contributed lobsters and clams, and the farmers milk and cream. In a short time enough money was raised to buy the materials. A former South Gouldsboro man, George Bunker, who owned a hardware store in Massachusetts, donated a piece of land on which to build

funds are available.

"It was voted that the church society gratefully accept Mr. Bunker's offer and agree to make every reasonable effort to meet the terms of the proposition."

In the winter of 1954-55, a series of church suppers were put to start a fund to purchase a new oil furnace to heat the church. A committee of three: William Hammond, chairman; and Marion Little and Edwin Wright, recommended that the wall duct type furnace be selected in preference to the floor type.

Drive For Funds

Having decided on the type of furnace, the members got busy in an organized drive for funds. The men put on chef's caps and gave several suppers. They invited speakers from the Fish and Game Department to give talks on hunting and conservation. The University of Maine was invited to send speakers and moving pictures.

These combined suppers and lectures and several square dances brought out a public response that insured the success of the fund drive. More important, perhaps, it proved that "Sewing Circle Churches" can fill a community's social and spiritual needs.

Donate Labor

Carpenters were hired to start the work and local farmers and fishermen donated their labor to help the work. The farmers brought their teams and hauled the stone needed for the foundation. Fishermen swung hammers and paint brushes and when the building was finished it was truly a community church.

After the building was finished, pews were bought and other improvements made. All of these were on a "pay-as-you-go" basis and the church was never burdened with heavy debt. Ministers from the Winter Harbor and West Gouldsboro Churches, and the Sea Coast Mission delivered the Sunday sermons.

In April 1924 the Bunker Memorial Church Society was incorporated. Hugh Hooper was elected president; James Bunker, vice president; Sadie M. Hooper, clerk; Lenora Bunker, treasurer. The directors were Hugh Hooper, Lenora Bunker, Elijah Bunker, Mary J. Bunker and Ida Hooper.

Dedicated

The church was formally dedicated on October 26, 1924, with a large congregation made up of local people and delegations from nearby churches. The Rev. Harold Nutter of the Winter Harbor Baptist Church and the Rev. C. W. Turner, assisted the pastor, Mrs. Alice M. Peasley, in the dedication ceremonies.

A council was formed to recognize the organization of the new church. It consisted of the Rev. C. W. Turner, Missionary pastor, the Rev. A. M. MacDonald, president of the Sea Coast Mission; Thomas Searles, treasurer Sea Coast Mission, the Rev. J. Homer Nelson, Sea Coast Mission, Judge B. E. Clark, trustee, Sea Coast Mission; Harold Nutter, pastor, Winter Harbor Baptist Church, and Deacon E. E. Torrey of the Winter Harbor Church.

Considers Proposal

In February, 1928, a special meeting of the Church Society was called to consider a proposal by James Bunker and Captain Eugene Sargent. Following is a record of the meeting as recorded by the society's clerk, Hilda Hammond:

"Mr. James Bunker offered to purchase the Alonzo Sargent property in association with Capt Eugene Sargent. The building to be used by the church as a parish house or parsonage and the said building to be purchased by the church as soon as possible."