

"The Methodist Episcopal Centennial"

Carroll County Times Article for 12 October 1997

By Jay A. Graybeal

Seventy-five years ago members of the Methodist Episcopal Church celebrated the centennial of Wesley Chapel near Eldersburg. A feature of the celebration was the pilgrimage to the Manro Farm donated by Mr. and Mrs. George W. Albaugh for use as a boy's home. The 6 October 1922 issue of the Westminster Democratic Advocate carried a front page story about the centennial and a photograph of the participants on the porch of the Manro Farm:

"M. E. CENTENNIAL

FARM PRESENTED BY MR. AND MRS. GEO. W. ALBAUGH FOR BOYS' HOME -BISHOP MCDOWELL MAKES ACCEPTANCE-LARGE CROWD IN ATTENDANCE.

On Sunday, September 24th, began the services commemorative of the 100th anniversary of the erection of Wesley Chapel of the Methodist Episcopal Church, near Eldersburg, this county, with the sermon by Rev. Dr. Charles W. Baldwin, of Baltimore, a former pastor. On Sunday afternoon, Rev. Dr. E. L. Watson, of Roland Park Church, Baltimore, preached the sermon; and at the evening service, Rev. Dr. John T. Ensor, of the Walbrook Church, Baltimore, was the speaker. On Monday evening, September 25th, the pastor, Rev. J. G. Fields, preached the sermon; on Tuesday night, Rev. R. N. Edwards, of Centenary Church, this city; on Wednesday night, Rev. W. C. Harden, of Milton Avenue Church, Baltimore; on Thursday night, Rev. W. L. Lynn, of Monroe Street Church, Baltimore, were the speakers.

The anniversary celebration reached its climax on Friday morning, September 29th, when about a thousand persons from all parts of Carroll county, with many from Baltimore and other distant parts of the State came to the church and about 500 of them crowded the edifice to hear the anniversary sermon, preached by Bishop William Fraser McDowell. Rev. J. M. Gillum, district superintendent, conducted the service; Rev. Dr. C. Herbert Richardson offered the opening prayer; and Rev. Joel Brown pronounced the benediction.

Following the services at the chapel, the congregation and many others went to the Manro farm, about one and one-half miles distant, presented by Mr. and Mrs. George W. Albaugh, of this city, to the Methodist Protestant Conference of Maryland, as the site of a Boys' Home. Here, from early morning, Messrs. Graham and George Melville, aided by an efficient corps of assistants, had been busy preparing thousands of sandwiches, coffee and other good things for the complimentary luncheon, of which about 1000 persons partook. Ham sandwiches, fried chicken, pickles, ice cream and coffee, in abundance, were served to all.

After the luncheon, appropriate exercises were conducted by Presiding Elder W. W. Barnes. Prayer was offered by Rev. E. T. Mowbray. District Superintendent J. M. Gillum related the story of the gift of Mr. and Mrs. Albaugh, telling how some months ago Mr. Albaugh offered the conference the choice of any farm owned by him as the site for a boys' home, of Mr. Albaugh's disclaimer of any credit to himself for his generous gift, and his declaration that his action was prompted by the influence of his mother and his wife. He told how in the final choice, two farms were considered, that known as the Gorsuch farm, within the bounds of the New Windsor Circuit, regarded as an appropriate site, because of its proximity to the spot where Robert Strawbridge preached the first Methodist sermon in Maryland; of the selection of the Manro farm, containing 315 acres, because of its more favorable location on the new

State road from Westminster to Baltimore, via Eldersburg, only twenty miles from the City Hall, Baltimore. Mr. Albaugh, with Mrs. Albaugh by his side, made formal presentation of the property to the conference, and in his brief address paid beautiful tribute to the memory of his mother. Bishop McDowell announced its informal acceptance, to be followed later by official acceptance by the conference, and in a thrillingly beautiful and touching prayer and benediction, invoked God's blessing on the work here inaugurated, and upon the donors and their family.

Rev. J. G. Fields, pastor on the circuit, expressed his joy at the manner in which the anniversary exercises had been conducted; paid tribute to the various committees that had contributed to their success; to those, who had conducted the music at the chapel and at the farm; and to the reporter said he wished through the press to express especially gratitude to Messrs. Graham and George Melville and those who aided them in the preparation for the luncheon at the farm; and to the Frounfelter Brothers, for their generosity in furnishing the lighting plant for the chapel during the week."

The newspaper column closed with a list of prominent clergymen who had attended the centennial exercises.

Photo caption: This image appeared in the 6 October 1922 Democratic Advocate with the caption, "On Porch Of Dwelling On The Manro Farm", Mr. and Mrs. Albaugh are standing in center of porch. Historical Society of Carroll County, gift of George Billingslea, 1997.