

IMAGES

... then and now

From The Indian Hill Historical Society

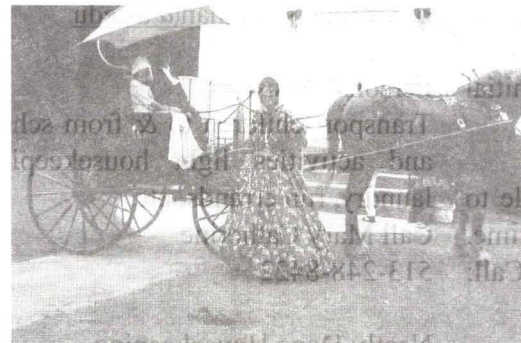
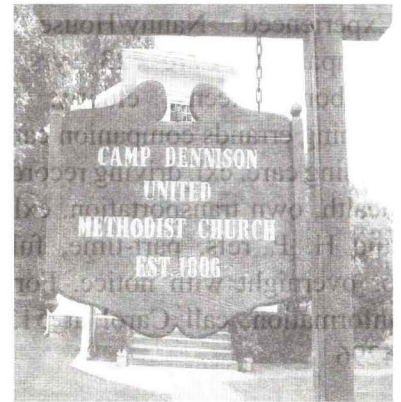


**Buckingham Lodge
1861**

Camp Dennison United Methodist Church: 200 Years Strong

In 1806 the first Methodist meeting in Camp Dennison was held in Henry Stroman's cabin. The service was led by a circuit rider, Peter Cartwright, known as the *Preacher on Horseback*. The Methodist Society of Camp Dennison was an outgrowth of the Milford Church, which had a membership of 750 in 1805-06.

Services were held in homes every 2 -6 weeks with homespun circuit riders preaching from scripture, embellishing sermons with anecdotes from everyday life. They were charismatic, passionate, and powerful in their exhortations, and brought many pioneer converts into their fold. These ministers conducted worship, performed weddings and baptisms, and counseled local folk. They were nicknamed saddleback preachers as they were constantly on the move. When there was no minister, local church members held meetings with a respected Methodist as class leader. Meetings generally included hymns, prayers, petitions, and personal faith testimonials. Henry Stroman was the first Camp Dennison class leader; and other residents handled preaching duties over the next 40 years. The Camp Dennison believers were considered Milford Methodists until 1845.



That year, a meeting was held at Kugler's School, and a committee of seven men selected Trustees to form a local church. They were John Kugler, Jeremiah Price, Eleazer Campbell, Henry Stroman, and Smith Buckingham. Subscriptions for the project were given by 153 people. Mathias Kugler donated the land, contributed \$200 of the \$1,000 cost, and supervised the church's construction. This permanent building for worship was located on the east side of Glendale Milford Road, just below Camp Dennison Cemetery.

During the Civil War, the Union Army established a training camp in the area, and Dennison General Hospital was created to serve the wounded. The Sisters of Charity came from Cincinnati to Camp Dennison to help nurse and cook for sick and recuperating soldiers. To avoid the cost of the daily train trip from town, they took up residence in the Methodist Church. One

of the nuns later described how they used the pulpit for a storeroom, boards for tables, and the floor for rest.

In 1868 the Trustees authorized moving the church to a more central location that was less flood prone. Two lots of a subdivision on Jackson Street were purchased, and the church was moved and rebuilt at its present location. A new roof, floor, and 10 additional feet were added to the structure, for a total cost of \$850.

During the 20th century, donations and subscriptions paid for another new roof, vestibule, electricity, maintenance, additional internal improvements, and three lots adjacent to the church. A Community Building (originally a chicken house) was donated to the Methodists. It served as a primary school for a short time while improvements were being made on the Camp Dennison Schools. It was later replaced by the brick Sunday School, built entirely by volunteers in 1960. The entire community uses the structure for a polling place during elections and neighborhood church dinners.

This summer the church marked 200 years. Pastor Anita Grau dressed as an historic circuit rider, and large crowds came to the celebration. Food, games, and speeches were featured, as members and friends of the church convened one August afternoon. The highlight of the festivities was the unveiling of a monument stone recognizing the Bicentennial of Camp Dennison United Methodist Church. All sang together "There's a Church in the valley by the wildwood" in observance of the historic occasion.