

## Church Building History

In **1715** the Lutheran and German Reformed Congregations formed a church at Pinck's Corners (near the intersection of Routes 9 and 9G, where the old cemetery still stands). They built a log church. Later a disagreement arose between the congregations and they agreed to split into independent churches.

The Lutheran congregation then built St. Peter's, (The Old Stone Church), on Route 9 in present day Rhinebeck and the Rhynbeck German Reformed Church continued meeting in the old log church. Later the Lutheran congregation who had built St. Peter's, (the Old Stone Church), dissolved.

The German Reformed congregation's first permanent pastor, the Reverend Coch came from Germany at the invitation of the church and in twenty-eight years he baptized 1,819 children, (700 during the Revolutionary War period).

In **1796** John Armstrong and his wife Alda sold a five acre parcel of land, in what was known as Hardscrabble, to George Shook, Anthony Stratt and Nickolas Hoffman for the purpose of building a new church for their congregation that had existed since 1715. They had originally worshiped in the log church located at Pinck's Corners. The church elders paid thirty pounds for the new land. It was agreed that the land could be used by the congregation for their church as long as it was an active Protestant church. Should the congregation stop having services on the land the title would revert to the Armstrong's or their descendants. (In **1919** a Quitclaim Deed was executed by James S. Armstrong in order that St. Paul's would always have title to the land).

In **1784** our church was incorporated in Albany under the name Zion's Church, the papers were signed by Robert Livingston, Chancellor of New York

During the period of **July 1800** and September **1802** the congregation moved their church to the Red Hook property. At that time the area was known as Hardscrabble, (the Rhinebeck Town line extended to Columbia County at that time). They were known as Zion's German Reformed Church. Originally they erected a frame church building circa **1803**, on the same location of the current church, but it was severely damaged in a wind storm and they then replaced it with a stone church that was built in **1833-1834**.

We have a writing from **1844** describing the fine stone church, parsonage and lecture room.

In **1846** the members of the German Reformed Church were unable to sustain a pastor and they joined the Lutherans.

In **1860** the church purchased land from James and Jane Fisk.



In **1876** the church purchased land from Alexander Bassett.

In **1893** the church purchased land from Irving and Almina Fraleigh.

In **1881** there was a newspaper article that described St. Paul's as "a large, substantial stone edifice, with a fine parsonage, lecture room, cemetery and ample sheds."

After the Civil War in **1866** the stone church building was "greatly remodeled and improved." When you look at the pictures posted in the Hall you will see that the old church had galleries on three sides and from the interior pictures we have it seems that this remodeling that was done brought the building from what must have been its colonial interior into the then fashionable "Victorian Era." It seems strange to see the juxtaposition of the Colonial type pews and all the Victorian curlicues and decorations.

We have old pictures of the stone church when it was decorated for an entertainment. We can see that they had a hanging curtain behind the scene, such as would be used as a backdrop on a stage. I am certain that the only type of entertainment allowed in the church would have been religious in nature, but still it was entertainment. I think that it was one of the main factors in their wanting to enlarge the Lecture Room.

In doing the research through all of the old papers, it has been interesting to see the pride members have always taken in maintaining these old buildings. Not only maintaining, but also modernizing and keeping up to date with what was considered necessary for comfort as well as making certain that their church and ancillary buildings were something that they could point to with pride.

All of these old churches in town were very much the center of their congregations lives. Friendships were formed through them, activities were centered around them and, most importantly, their deep abiding faith and love of God was always here to comfort them.

In **1875** a new fence was built in front of the stone church and the parsonage. I assume that the only picture we have of the old church was taken just after that fence was built.

In **1884** after the Lecture Room of the Lutheran church was rebuilt and repaired again, (the "Lecture Room" is currently used as our Parish Hall), In **1886** Alfred Allendorf, a member of the Church Council, suggested that a new church be built since the old **1833**, stone building was quite out of repair.

In **1887**, Rev. S.A. Weikert began canvassing the congregation for subscriptions and when the agreed upon \$10,500. was pledged, the Council hired the architect L.H. Valk of New York City to design and supervise the construction of the new church.

The building committee was appointed including Wm. Moul, chairman, Edwin Phillips, Adam Metzgar, Jacob Phillips, and George Cramer.



The last service held in the old stone church on this site was on Easter Sunday, **1889**.

The cut stones that made up the exterior of the old church were removed and cleaned of mortar and then reused in the foundation of the "new" church.

The cellar of the new church building was hand dug by members of the congregation.

The corner stone of the old **1833** stone church was installed in the basement of the "new" church, it can be seen there now, in the basement area adjacent to the Kort Room.

The cornerstone of this church was laid with impressive ceremonies on August 4, **1889**. More than one thousand people attended the day long ceremonies that featured many guest speakers. In those days, without television, radio and easy travel it would have been considered the most interesting entertainment that this area would have to offer during that year.

Mr. William C. Kipp with day workers and church members framed the building.

Mr. Van DeBogart's company did the masonry work.

The exterior building was finished before New Years Day of **1890** ( approximately 8 months). The weather being to cold to do plaster and wood finish, all work was suspended until spring.

The church building is 84 X 65 feet, (5460 square feet on one floor), it covers the footprint of the old stone church and extends beyond it on the north and east sides.

The style of the building is Gothic and was said to be quiet and appropriate in its details.

The foundation of the building is faced with rough dressed Ashlar brownstone, with a water table of the same stone, smoothly dressed.

The walls are faced with Croton brick and backed with North River hard brick with an air chamber from the water table to the top. The air chamber is capped with brownstone coping. The window and door arches, sills and ornaments are all Ashlar brownstone.

The south entrance originally had a porte cochere made of wood, this allowed members arriving in their carriages or wagons to let family member alight without getting wet in bad weather. It was removed in 1957.

The original roof of the church was slate, the bell tower rises to a height of 115 feet. The spire is topped with a gilded cross.

The rounded tower with a cone shaped roof that abuts the bell tower houses the spiral stairs that leads to a small room. That small room has a ladder which leads to another small room which houses the ladder that leads to the bell tower, the stairs are lit by small stained glass windows.

The bell itself was cast by Meneely & Co. Of Troy, New York and weighs 1,124 pounds without the clapper or cradle and was donated by J.W. Eiseffer or Red Hook. In the north vestibule you will see two ropes. The small rope moves a clapper that hits the bell making a softer ringing sound, it is rung traditionally when the Lord's Prayer is said. The large rope moves the entire bell on its cradle, that is rung as a call to worship or in celebration.

The center of the church roof has a cupola which allowed ventilation from the center of the church ceiling. There was a system of wires and slides from the center ventilating traps and the gable windows, that ended on the floor under the last pews that controlled the ventilation.

Ventilation was considered very necessary in the 1800's when the church was built, not just to cool it in the summertime, but equally importantly to ventilate the odor and fumes from the coal furnace and lighting all the oil lamps that were used for evening services.

The small room in the north east corner is the sacristy. It has a small fireplace with a Franklin stove faced with antique tiles.

The small room on the south side of the altar is a vestry room, used for counting and storage. Originally, it was the working area of the old pipe organ, where someone would have handled the bellows of the organ. Today, it has the speakers for the electronic organ, and wisely no one goes in there until the organist is finished playing.

The baptistery corner has a dais for the font and a fan vaulted ceiling.

The choir dais on the opposite side from the Baptistery adds to the symmetry, it also has the fan vaulted ceiling, solid wood columns

All the wainscoting, trims, doors and pews are select birch with a natural finish.

The millwork was all done by William H. Travel of Hudson, New York

The two large columns are built of corrugated iron with wood panels over.

The floor begins rising at the third pew and the floor height difference between the third pew and the last is 21 inches.

The obvious reason for the inclined height of the floor, and the pews with curved backs, being arranged in a semicircle is that anyone sitting anywhere in the church has a good view of the altar and pulpit area.

The pews originally had felt cushions, but today even without them, they are comfortable seating. The pews were furnished by Globe Furniture of Northville, Michigan.



There were ninety-two pews in all, with a seating capacity of 450. In those days you could seat up to 600 people with chairs in the aisles in addition to the pews. Although I have never seen a copy, I have been told that there is a picture of the church with every seat filled.

The side windows are of rolled cathedral and opalescent glass with "jewels", a portion of each window is arranged so that it can be opened for ventilation.

The beautiful stained glass windows above the altar were furnished by J & R Lamb of New York City and were paid for as memorials.

The Rose Window, with its Quatrefoil pattern of tracery, (on the west wall), gives a sense of lift, or elevation when viewed from the rear of the church.

The aisle carpeting in the church has always been a deep red. Originally, there were aisle runners, figured, such as an Oriental carpet.

The choir area is two steps up from the chancel floor, partially screened with a red velvet curtain hung on a brass rail.

The original pipe organ was installed in 1890. Then replaced by a new, larger one that was paid for by donations from the congregation as well as a matching grant from Andrew Carnegie from his trust for church organs. When that organ fell out of repair it was replaced with an Allen Electronic organ in 1960.

A very important consideration of the architects of this church was the design for the acoustic properties and here they excelled.

The building is supplied by fourteen registers for hot air, originally heated by a dome coal furnace and Magee heater located in the basement. At the rear of the building there was a coal slide. When the church was built, a man would drive up with a wagon load of coal and shovel it into the basement coal bin.

Shoveling the coal into the furnace and removing the ashes was one of the sexton's jobs. You will see posted in the Hall the original Sexton's Duties list.

The church today has most of its original furnishing. The altar, stalls, pulpit chairs, organ board, altar desk, vases were all donated as memorials, or gifts of the different church organizations or individuals.

If you look at the north wall in the north vestibule you will see a door that has a step for entry into that doorway. That is the spiral staircase that starts your climb up to the belfry. The exterior of that stairway forms a tower with stained glass windows ascending and at the top. After you climb the spiral stairs you come to a small room that has a stained glass window on the west side. From



that small room you climb a ladder up into another small room that has another ladder with a trap door that leads into the belfry. From the first small room you can also access the attic area over our high arched ceilings. (You can take my word for it that it takes brave men to make use of that attic area when work has to be done up there).

Today, you can see the bell ropes hanging in the north vestibule. These extra long ropes are a recent addition. Until they were hung down to the vestibule it was the acolytes (reward or punishment) job to climb up the spiral staircase to ring the church bells for services. Unfortunately, at this time our bell has a crack. While it is still usable it doesn't have the deep tone that it was designed for. People in the area can remember when you could clearly hear the bell more than a mile away. Hopefully we will someday have the funds for the proper repair.

The end cost of the church was \$18,650. Well above their original budget of \$11,000. But "the congregation was well pleased with their new house of worship and felt that they had received full value for their money." They quickly raised the additional money to pay off the church. Although the church was completed earlier, the official dedication was held on September 12, **1890** with a great crowd attending that as well.

The architect of this church, Lawrence B. Valk is quoted as saying, "Churches are built for the salvation of souls, not for architectural display to the sacrifice of comfort, of acoustic lacking in cheerfulness and the very essentials to make religious worship a matter of pleasure".

### The Sheds

Originally there were several small barns behind the church building where the farmers could stable their horses while they were in services. All of the early churches had these "sheds" or small barns for horses. When the farmers and their families would come to the church on Sundays they would stay for the entire day and not return home until after evening services. The distances were great and travel too slow to return home between services. The minister would have a larger barn to enable him to stable his horse and store his carriage as well. At this time only the minister's barn location is still in use with a two story replacement barn that was built at the turn of the twentieth century and is used for storage.

In **1893** the Methodist congregation was preparing to build their new church asked the Board of St. Paul's if they could have use of their "Chapel" while they were awaiting their new church. Then our Pastor Hughes became ill and during his absence, arrangements were made to have the minister of the Methodist church occupy the pulpit of St. Paul's while his new church was being built. The arrangement worked well with the Methodist's taking the offering one week and St. Paul's receiving it the next week. The friendship of the congregations was cemented and when the new Methodist church was completed, St. Paul's gave their Methodist friends a new pulpit for their new church.

In **1900** a system of copper lightning rods was installed on the church for the sum of \$76.. This



was done after the steeple was struck by lightening and a small fire ignited. Luckily, it did little damage.

In 1903 electric lighting was installed in the church for the first time.

In 1906 a more complete electric installation was made in the church. The total cost of the "complete" installation was \$228..

In the early days of the church, money was just as important as it is today. In the early 20th Century the cost of a seat in church was \$30. per year. Donation envelopes were \$5.20, (ten cents a week) plus, of course, your donation that went into the envelope. Beyond that you were, of course, expected to pledge what you could both for the church and benevolence.

Another fund raiser that they used was called the blackboard system. The floor plan of the church was drawn on a blackboard that hung were the current bulletin board hangs today, (in the back of the church). The floor plan on the blackboard was divided into a grid and parishioners were asked to donate the amount called for by the number of squares they sponsored.

In old Council Minutes that I read, it said that the Protestants in this area were "people with short arms and deep pockets.

In 1908 the brass rail for the choir area was added.

In 1911 the hardwood floor was installed in the church replacing the original plank floor then they laid a deep red, (figured) runner that ran up the center aisle.

In 1915 The New York State Library took receipt of all of our early church records, they made bound, photostatic copies of them to return to us. The originals are now stored and maintained by the State. Should we ever want them returned, we would turn over the photostatic copies and they would return the originals. There is of course no doubt that the best place for these very early records is the State Museum.

In 1925 a graduating class (of three) was honored in Red Hook High School graduation exercises.

In 1936 the curtain in front of the choir area was made by the "Ladies Aid Society" from red velvet material, purchased from Wallace & Company in Poughkeepsie for \$10.73.

In 1937 the last horse barn (shed) was torn down.

In 1960 an Allen Electronic organ replaced the old pipe organ. The original pipes were left in place as a decorative element.

During 1956-57 the port cochere over the south entrance was removed and there was a

modification of the basement in order to install plumbing for the church's first indoor bathrooms for the congregation as well as build the "Kort Room" which is used as a meeting room.

A new chimney has been installed on the south side of the building, replacing the original, to service a modern heating system. (It was paid for by The Ladies Aid Society).

In 1965 the eternal light was installed in the chancel.

In 1967 the Council employed the artist Mr. A. Hohensteiner to paint the religious symbols on the chancel walls and ceilings

The original slate roof was replaced in the 1970's. Now we have a new copper roof was installed over the main part of the church, (but that is a story for another day).

In the 1980's Lexan was installed over the stained glass windows at a cost of \$7,000..

In 1998 after a long period of hard work by Ruth M. Queen and David F. Queen an application for nomination to the Federal as well as State Historic Register for the church building proper was made. In February of 1998 that designation was granted.

As quoted from the designation "appointment to the Historic Register is not made just because a building itself is old, it also has to have cultural importance to the area". We, at St. Paul's, are proud of the contribution that our church and ancillary buildings as well as our congregations have made to the town and village of Red Hook and the Northern Dutchess area. for the past three-hundred years.

In 1939 the Dodd House, the salt box structure adjacent to the parking area of the church, was purchased along with additional vacant land to allow for future growth of the church. This was the last property that we purchased.

**ALL ARE INVITED TO TOUR THE PARSONAGE ADJACENT AND THEN  
CONTINUE ON TO THE HALL WHERE COFFEE AND CAKE WILL BE SERVED.**

**BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY WE HAVE POSTED MANY ENLARGEMENTS OF OLD  
PICTURES, PLANS AND WRITINGS ON THE WALLS OF THE HALL THAT WE  
ARE CERTAIN THAT YOU WILL ENJOY.**

**THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING.**



## Cemetery

**The Daughters of the American Revolution have named this a Revolutionary Cemetery.**

It is not known how soon after 1796 the cemetery was begun, (the oldest headstone remaining is from 1813), but it stands to reason that since cemetery land was purchased with the church land that the first burials would have taken place shortly after erecting the church which was in 1802-1803.

St. Paul's Cemetery has pre-Revolutionary as well as Revolutionary era graves continuing on to present day. In taking a quiet walk through the cemetery you will see many names reflecting the old Dutch and German heritage of the community as well as the church.

People of all faiths are buried here.

Between 1892 and 1893 additional land purchases were made to enlarge the cemetery

In the summer of 1907 the Cemetery Committee was delighted with having obtained a new horse mower for maintaining the grounds. The mower was purchased by the church for the sum of \$88.45 with the harness for the horse costing an additional \$15.00.

In 1917 a receiving vault was built in the cemetery at a cost of \$1,000.00.

**The report of the Cemetery Committee to the Church Council in October 1903 said "Our finances have been somewhat curtailed this year by the fact that the health of the community is so good that there have been but seventeen interments made during the year, which is the smallest number since the cemetery has been in our care."**



### The Lecture Room, The Chapel, Our Parish Hall

In 1844 there was a description of our property saying that "the church was a large, substantial stone edifice, there was a fine parsonage and a lecture room, there were also substantial sheds.

In 1861-1863, led by Rev. Cornell, church members rebuilt the "Lecture Room" enlarging it and also digging out and putting a small basement under it. This was a huge undertaking at that time when you consider the unrest in the country during the Civil War. During those years (without our modern news outlets), speakers would be invited to talk on the subjects concerning the country and its people. Therefore, the Lecture Room could serve that purpose of having secular speakers in to address the townspeople as well as using it for church functions. When they built it originally well before 1844, there was only a stone foundation and small frame building.

In 1880 the "Ladies Missionary Society" held their meetings in the "Chapel" so they must have begun using it for some services at that time.

In 1881 to 1884 the congregation decided to build a true "Chapel" on the site of the Lecture Room. They enlarged the basement to a full size also enlarging the meeting space, they included decorative elements such as the choir loft, arched windows, cathedral ceiling, that made it appear as a Chapel. The contract cost of the building at that time was \$2,300..

We can find no written record or memory as to why the "Chapel" as we know it today, was built in 1884, but I think that the size and condition of the church proper was no longer adequate and by building the Chapel they had that building to use for some services. Also I feel that there was beginning to be talk of replacing the church, and during that time of construction the "Chapel" could be used for services.

In June 1893 the Methodist Congregation of Red Hook sent a letter requesting that they be allowed to use the Chapel for their services while their new church was built. Permission was granted. By the time they were to use it for services, the minister at our church was taken ill and the two congregations decided to hold services together, with the Methodist minister preaching and the congregations sharing the offering.

In 1894 St. Paul's Ladies Aid Society was formed. The Ladies Aid was responsible for raising a great deal of money for the church and its maintenance. When the church needed a new chimney the Ladies Aid fund raisers paid for it.

If you look closely at the parish hall you will see that there is a dropped ceiling over the high arched chapel ceiling, and you can see in front by the stage, and on the side walls there are



beautiful arched windows, and hidden above the back, (west) wall, on the second floor there are choir risers.

In 1903 electric was originally installed in the Chapel and then enlarged in 1906.

In August 1916 the church received bids for building an addition to the Chapel.

In 1917 the Ladies Aid Society paid for installing the tin ceiling in the infants room in the chapel (under the choir loft). If you look at the small classroom, closest to Broadway (west), you will see that tin ceiling. There is a wall of bulletin boards, those boards are hiding a wall of windows. This was designed in order that women with infants and small children could listen to the services being held and the babies would not disturb the congregation and pastor. This was a very new concept at that time.

In 1917 the Church Council paid \$10. to oil the street in front of their buildings, (to keep the dust down).

In 1918, (WW I) the Church Council elected to purchase \$1,101.87 in Victory Bonds.

June, 18, 1919 at the Lutheran Brotherhood meeting it was moved and seconded that a committee be appointed to arrange a "Smoker" and social evening at the Hall, (formerly the Chapel), to welcome the boys home who were returning from the war. Mr. Massonneau would furnish the cigars. By these entries in their minutes we can see that they were no longer calling the building the Chapel, instead it was the Hall. Undoubtedly, once the new, large church had been erected there was no need to use the building as a chapel

In 1919 the Church Hall was enlarged again, after the project had been deferred for two years due to the war. The addition that was built was the wing to the south in the back of the hall and the stage area.

On November 25, 1919 at a Lutheran Brotherhood meeting a motion was made, seconded and approved with a "rising vote" that the "Poughkeepsie Sailor Girls" be invited to give an entertainment at the Hall, and the proceeds be used to purchase and install stage scenery.

The "Poughkeepsie Sailor Girls" gave a play and the \$100.. Proceeds were used for improvements.

After most Lutheran Brotherhood meetings the men enjoyed their cigars.

After the last addition to the Chapel, the Lutheran Brotherhood purchased drapes and scenery for the stage. Obviously, a great many entertainments were given there.

Early in the century the Hall was used for many types of entertainment. The Lutheran Brotherhood bought the first privately held "moving picture machine" and used it both for their



own entertainment, as well as for fund raisers. They brought in travelogs of exotic places as well interesting sights from the United States. They also brought in many lecturers to give talks on education, politics and religion. The children would also use the Hall to put on plays for their parents entertainment. One of the Lutheran Brotherhood's early fundraisers was to earn enough money to purchase and have installed "scenery" on the stage that could be used in the theatricals.

On November 5, 1935 a "rising" vote of thanks was made to brother Dillman for making a box in the shape of a church for Brotherhood members to use for depositing their contributions for church improvements. That box is being used today as a suggestion box in the church.

In 1926 the Brotherhood paid for installing new lighting fixtures in the Chapel.

For many, many years the Ladies Aid sponsored a Strawberry Festival as a very successful fundraiser.

In 1937 Red Hook Central School was destroyed by fire, until rebuilt, classes took place in the Chapel.

In the Hall kitchen there is a steam table, (with two large kettles), that was purchased from Mr. Stockenberg in 1936 at a cost of \$22.54 as a donation of the Ladies Aid Society.

The closet in the dining room was built by Mr. Schiette in 1936 at a cost of \$43.75, again paid for by the Ladies Aid Society.

In 1940 Dr. Hipsley, our pastor, joined with the other minister's of the area in teaching weekly religion classes at Red Hook High School.

In May of 1942 the American Red Cross was granted permission to use the northeast Sunday School room in the Chapel, to be outfitted by them, as an emergency room for the duration of World War II.

The Chapel was also used for Civil Defense and Red Cross meetings. A room was also set up for use as a War Emergency Room, with cots, bedding, and medical supplies.

Our Pastor, Walter J. Bielitz, resigned to report for active duty as a Chaplain in the Army for the duration of World War II.

Who remembers when Bard College was St. Stephen's College?

St. Paul's Annual Turkey Dinner, served in early November, was the biggest money maker the church had. The first dinner was served in 1898. Close to 1000 dinners were served over two days, with two seatings each day. Lucky Platt and Wallace Co. Would each purchase large blocks of tickets for the dinner for their employees. There were men's and women's coat check rooms, handcraft tables, bake sales. The women would roast the turkeys and make the gravy at home,

everything else would be made in the church kitchen, with most of the ingredients being donated. The tradition was stopped in **1950** with the pastor calling for a special donation to cover the cost of what would have been raised through the dinner. I think that a lot of women were leaning on their husbands to make certain that they gave a generous donation in order that this tremendously heavy work occasion would not have to be done any more. In the records of one year they had 59 women cooking, cleaning and decorating for this dinner.

Men often don't understand the work that goes into these events. The Lutheran Brotherhood who would sponsor a ham dinner every year, they decided that to lighten the workload they would hire a woman to wash the dishes, (they served about two-hundred dinners). For washing the dishes they voted to give her a dinner, the equivalent of \$2.00.

Around **1950** another source in income was realized when Red Hook Central School rented our Hall to use as classroom space for their kindergarten when the population grew rapidly.

In **1953** the choir loft in the Chapel was sealed off and a dropped ceiling installed in order to conserve heat.

For many, many years St. Paul's had an annual Strawberry Festival which was a major fund raiser.

Spaghetti Dinners, Ham Dinners, Chicken Dinners, Potluck Suppers were all major fund raisers, as well dinners held to enjoy the fellowship with other members. As you look around the two story Hall with its large kitchen and huge Garland stove you can see that the Hall was built for serious cooking and serving.

St. Paul's today still holds dinners and is starting to get back to the business of putting the Hall to good use. For a donation people can use the main rooms for private parties and functions, we use the space for outreach for civic groups, (again, a donation is expected), but we are glad to share this great space and very happy to support the groups that need the meeting space.



### **Duties of the Sexton, 1890**

Transcribed exactly from the original pencil written minutes.

The committee appointed by the church council met on the afternoon of January 14, all members being present and adopted by resolution the following rules for the guidance of the sexton of the church.

**1st.** It shall be the duty of the sexton to kindle the fires during the months of December, January and February on Saturday afternoons, not earlier than 5 p.m. both in the chapel and the church. For Tuesday night prayer meetings at 12 p.m. of that day: and at all times when fires are needed to have a temperature of 70 degrees at the hour of commencement of the service.

**2nd.** To see that the lamps are in order for evening service and after all meetings in both the chapel and church to see that lamps are out, everything safe and the buildings are locked.

**3rd.** To attend at all regular and special meetings to all duties, and no substitute to be provided unless permission be granted by the church council.

**4th.** To ventilate the church at the close of the morning service, and also for a few minutes immediately after the lighting of the lamps in the evening to free the church from the odor which accompanies such lighting, and to keep the temperature of the church and chapel as near as possible to 70 degrees during the entire time of the service.

L.L. Stillman  
Geo. H. Cramer  
Edmond N. Pitcher

## **The Parsonage**

A parsonage was considered necessary adjunct to a minister's salary in the early days. Minister's were never what could be considered "well paid" (which is perhaps why so few of our ministers were married). As of 1954 only one child had ever lived in our parsonage. Then, as now, there were never quite enough ministers to go around to all the churches that were looking for them.

But the congregations that could offer a comfortable, well maintained parsonage would probably be considered a step ahead of other churches if all other things were equal.

Thereby, by **1844**, the first parsonage we have a record of was already built for St. Paul's. (There could have been a small, earlier one since the frame church was built in **1802-1803**). The first parsonage that we have a picture of was built in the same location as the present parsonage. From the one old picture that we have of that building it appears that it was a simple, frame, one and a half story colonial style building. Painted white with dark shutters and trim. It was not near the size of the present parsonage but yet appeared ample for a family. The old parsonage was remodeled and repaired several times but after 70 years it was determined to build a new "modern" parsonage.

The present parsonage was built between **1903** and **1906** at a cost of \$5,300.. The new parsonage had all the best that the new century had to offer, including a complete, indoor bathroom (it even had a bath tub), running water, and electric lights. It has beautiful woodwork, pocket doors, stained glass windows, and full basement and attic, (all the better to store the luggage and packing boxes that minister's families were always in need of. It was spacious and airy, all the better for all the meetings and get togethers that the minister and his wife were expected to host. It also had beautiful, wide porches for catching the summer breezes.

## **The Minister's Wife**

The minister's wife had a lot of work laid out for her. Beyond taking care of her husband and family like any other homemaker, she was also expected to attend every church service, (and they lasted for hours), as well as keep her home spotless, (the better to entertain all the drop in guests). There was always baking to do so that she had something to serve those same drop in guests and we can't forget all the meetings of different men's and women's clubs that met at the parsonage. In the winter the choir would practise at the parsonage in order that it was not necessary to heat another building.

After those meetings refreshments were also served, (more baking). She was expected to sing with the choir, often play the piano or organ and teach Sunday School when necessary. She must, (of course), belong to every women's club associated with the church, and then should she have any spare time she would be expected to make calls on any elderly or shut in members that may live in the village.



Although St. Paul's is a most beautiful church for weddings, in the early years almost all of the weddings were performed in the parsonage. (Another reason for keeping it spotless). Think of the housekeeping, as you tour the parsonage and you can imagine what that would entail.

Add to these responsibilities that she must always be a model of decorum, show kindness to everyone she meets and of course always look her best, (but not too good, she could never outshine the members of the congregation).

From all the reading, it appears that that although the minister was looked up to, thought of as God's representative to the congregation, the minister's wife was most often looked on as a servant of the congregation. Usually liked, often loved but she had to understand that she had no excuses for anything. Her flowers around the parsonage had to be lovely, her work always done, and of course her children had to be the best behaved in town.

I am certain that there is a most restful, beautiful, special place in heaven for minister's wives!

### **A Supposition**

At this point I would like to digress. What I say here is just a supposition but I am beginning to have a strong feeling about it.

When you look across Fisk Street, at number 11, (the old salmon colored home that sits close to the road), you are looking at a house that has a long oral history of being the parsonage for the Lutheran Church. This in itself is strange, since the Lutheran Church has always had its parsonage on site.

We have a writing from **1844** describing the fine stone church, parsonage and lecture room. Then we think about the fact that when the congregation decided to build their "new" church they began construction in **1889** and completed in **1890**.

But then when they obtained plans for their new parsonage in **1903**, it took them three years, until **1906**, to complete the house.

We have a picture of the original parsonage, although it is hard to make much out in that picture we can see that it is a one and a half story building with the length of the building parallel to Broadway and a front porch facing the road.

We also have a picture taken across the front of the Hall toward Fisk Street around **1890** and there were no buildings or landscaped areas in sight in that area of Fisk Street. As a matter of fact

the only building we see at all at that time is the top of a building on Elizabeth Street.

I am beginning to strongly feel the possibility that 11 Fisk Street is that old parsonage. If we look at the history of New York, (even America in the early days) those old farmers didn't waste anything. It was a very common matter for them to move buildings and they did it very well. They moved corn cribs, small barns, houses, several in town here, railroad stations, (here in Red Hook) anything that they decided that would do better in a different place. If they had a small house on a great site and wanted a larger one, first they would move the small house for someone else's use and then build their larger one there on that site. They were greatly aided by their method of construction. They did not use modern "balloon" construction. They built and overbuilt everything they erected.

Therefore, when it came time that they wanted to move a building they had no worry that it would not be safe and sturdy for the move. Certainly a move from the site of the present parsonage to the location of 11 Fisk Street, would have been a very easy one for them. By doing that the minister would have use of the old parsonage while they were building the new one and when they had completed the new parsonage they could sell or rent the old one recouping some of the costs of the new building. Just a supposition, but it is certainly something worth researching.

If we look at the lot on Fisk Street, we see that from the road toward the back yard the land drops off sharply. If the parsonage was moved they turned it so that what was the side of it when it was on Broadway became the front of it when it was on Fisk Street. (There was not enough depth to the Fisk Street lot to orient it the same way that it had been). They built a new front entry, closed off the old one and were set to go.

As I said, this is all supposition. To prove it as fact would take a lot of research, and it is something that I am hoping to find time for.

Again, what set me on the road to trying to figure this out was the strong oral history of that building being the Lutheran parsonage. Why, why, why, when we have always had one on site where it sits now. From before 1844 to 2008. Interesting isn't it?



## **THE TRIAL**

**In October, 1906 a trial was held in the Parish Hall after a harness that belonged to Rev. Hay, had been found in Mr. Lewis' shed. The harness had been separated into different pieces and was hidden in different places. Several witnesses were called, sworn in and testified, including the harness maker who identified the harness as one that he had made repairs to for Rev. Hay.**

On the 26th day of October in 1906 a notice was served on a Mr. Lewis demanding that he appear before the Church Council in the Chapel on October 29th, and further stating that his failure to appear would be construed as admitting his guilt.

On that day twelve members of the Church Council heard the case against Mr. Lewis. The Reverend Hay did not officiate since he was a material witness. Mr. Massonneau was elected as Chairman and Mr Stillman acted as attorney for the Church Council. Mr. Lewis was represented by his attorney Mr. Mattice.

The basis of the trial was that Mr. Lewis was accused of stealing the Rev. Hay's harness from Rev. Hay's barn during his absence.

There were several witnesses, including the harness maker who made all of the repairs of local harnesses in the area, a Mr. Whitnall. Mr. Whitnall attested to the fact that the harness that was found in several different pieces was Mr. Hay's harness. Mr. Whitnall had made several repairs that he could identify on that particular harness.

After reading the many pages of testimony I can honestly say that there would be doubt in my mind, although people familiar with the parties involved, as well as the harness, seem to be quite certain of their decision.

There are twenty pages of sworn and typed testimony in the case including an excellent plea by Mr. Lewis' attorney.

**On November 7th 1906 a meeting of eleven of the twelve Council Members that formed the jury decided that Mr. Lewis was guilty of stealing and concealing the property in question and his punishment was that "he be suspended from membership in the church until such time as he shall absolve himself from guilt, or confess his act and express his repentance to and be forgiven by the Council."**

**It is interesting that no one involved in the matter had any interest in bringing the matter to the legal authorities, thinking it best to resolve the matter within the church.**

**St. Paul's Cemetery of Red Hook**

**Fifteen soldiers of the Revolutionary War are buried in our cemetery. There are also graves of the pre-Revolutionary era.**

The Chancellor Livingston Chapter of the DAR Has declared this cemetery to be a Revolutionary Cemetery.

**Revolutionary War soldiers listed below:**

**Benner, John Felta** (stone gone)

Died 1833, July 13 age 91-6m-18d

Dutchess Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 6th Regiment

**Benner, Peter**

Died 1842, Dec. 2nd. Age 78-11m-21d

Dutchess Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 6th Regiment

**Davis, Henry**

Died 1834, April 7 in his 77th year

The Line - 4th Regiment

Dutchess Co. Militia, (L.B.R.)

Ulster Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 3rd Regiment

**Drom, Andrew**

Died 1819, Aug. 21 age 60- 5m. 21d.

Albany Co. Militia 6th Regiment

**Lewis, Thomas** (stone gone, wife's standing) Helena Van Buren

The line 3rd Regiment

Dutchess Co. Militia, Regiment of Minute Men

Dutchess Co. Militia, (L.B.R.) 4th Regiment

**Miller, Jacob**

Died 1836, March 28 Age 72- 11m. 10d.

The Line 2nd. & 3rd. Regiments

Dutchess Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 3rd Regiment

**Moore, Peterus**

Died 1833 May 29, Age 89- 6m. 10d.

Dutchess Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 6th Regiment



**Near, Henry**

Died 1847, Feb. 12, Age 86 - 6m. 27d.  
Albany Co. Militia, 8th Regiment  
Albany Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 8th Regiment

**Smith, Johannis**

Died 1815, April 18, Age 83 - 19d.  
An Associator, (Oath of Allegiance 1775)  
Ulster Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 2nd & 3rd Regiments  
Albany Co. Militia 8th & 10th Regiments

**Snider, George (Jury)**

Died 1828, Oct. 20, Age 65 - 9m.  
Dutchess Co. Militia 2nd Regiment  
Dutchess Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 6th Regiment

**Stickles, John**

Died 1816, Oct. 3rd Age 72 - 10m. 23d.  
Dutchess Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 6th Regiment

**Straat, Anthony**

Died 1813, Age 80 - 16d.  
Dutchess Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 6th Regiment

**Van Keuren, Tobias** (stone gone, wife's standing) Helena Lewis  
Dutchess Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 6th Regiment  
An Associator (Oath of Allegiance 1775)

**Waldorph, William**

Died 1807, Nov. 20, Age 83  
Dutchess Co. Militia (L.B.R.) 6th Regiment

**Whitemen, Jacob**

Died in his 86th year  
Albany Co. Militia 3rd Regiment

All of these graves are on the south side of the cemetery except  
Anthony Straat and Jacob Miller