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One Hundred Years  
of Methodism  
at Hauppauge, L. I.

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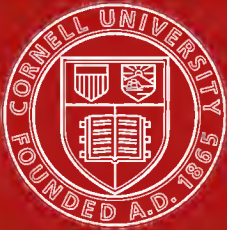
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March Thirteenth, 1806  
March Thirteenth, 1906



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The Methodist Episcopal Church at Hauppauge: built in 1812,  
remodeled in 1895.



ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF  
METHODISM  
AT HAUPPAUGE, L. I.

MARCH 13th, 1806

MARCH 13th, 1906

THE KING PRESS  
310 FULTON STREET, BROOKLYN

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The present pastor, Rev. Ralph Waldo Thompson



# The Methodist Episcopal Church

## At Hauppauge

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**I**N 1806 Long Island Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church was in the New York Conference, and the entire Island, outside of Brooklyn, was travelled over by the circuit preacher, who in that year was James Coleman. While Freeborn Garrettson was presiding Elder, and there were but two bishops in all the United States: Bishops Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury. The then village of Brooklyn had two preachers, as had the Long Island district, and the latter district, especially Sag Harbor with its great whaling interests, was considered as important as Brooklyn.

Hauppauge in 1806 contained several families who were religiously inclined, and, previous to this year, services were held whenever a travelling preacher came along. Sometimes in the little red school house, and sometimes at the house of some worthy brother. The Wheeler family seems to have led in religious matters, and regular meetings were held at the house of Jacob Wheeler, a part of whose house is still standing, occupied by the family of the late Henry Wills.

At this house the neighbors gathered on Sunday and week evenings for prayer and religious instruction. At other times services were held in the school house, which stood first about on the lawn of Wallace Donaldson, but was later removed to the south side of the Country road, nearly opposite the Donaldson store.

This little company of Methodists on March 13th, 1806, held a meeting at which was enacted a resolution which meant more for the betterment of society in the community than any similar action ever taken in Suffolk County.

The following was adopted (the original document is in existence in a good state of preservation):

“At a meeting of the male members of the Methodist Society of the Haupogues in Suffolk County, convened at the school

house, agreeable to public notice, for the express purpose of incorporating and electing trustees for said society, on the thirteenth day of March, A. D. 1806.

On motion, unanimously resolved, that Timothy Wheeler and Jacob Wheeler preside at this meeting and make return of the proceedings to the clerk of said County.

On motion, unanimously resolved, that Isaac Nichols, Jacob Wheeler, Elkanah Wheeler, George Wheeler and Samuel Brush, Jun., be and they are hereby duly elected constituted and appointed trustees, according to the form and effect of the statute of the State of New York, "entitled, an act to provide for the incorporation of Religious Societies," and that they, the said Isaac Nichols, Jacob Wheeler, Elkanah Wheeler, George Wheeler and Samuel Brush, Jun., and their successors in office, shall forever after be called, known and distinguished by the name and stile of "The Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church and Congregation of the Haupogues.,, We do hereby certify that the above is a true statement of the proceedings for incorporating the Methodist Episcopal Society of the Hauppauges in Suffolk County. As witness our hands and seals, this thirteenth day of March in the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and six.

TIMOTHY WHEELER, }  
 ISAAC WHEELER, } L.S.

*Returning Officers.*

JOSHUA SMITH, JR.  
 ELKANAH WHEELER.

The trustees proceeded immediately to class themselves when it appeared as followeth:

1st Class        { ELKANAH WHEELER  
                       { SAMUEL BRUSH, JUN.  
 2nd Class        { GEORGE WHEELER  
                       { JACOB WHEELER  
 3d Class         ISSAC NICHOLS

On motion in the board of trustees, resolved unanimously, that Richard Wheeler be clerk and treasurer for said trustees."

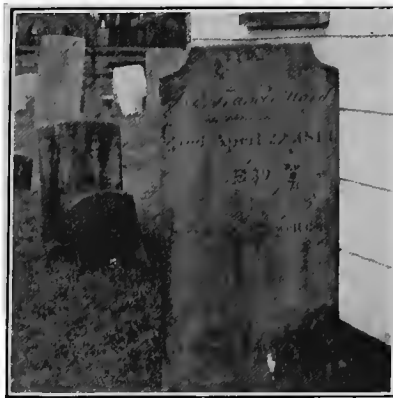
On Friday, May 22, 1806, Rev. Mitchel B. Bull preached at 3 P. M. at the house of George Wheeler. On Saturday, May 23, he preached at the house of Samuel Brush, Sen., at Comac. On Sunday, May 24, he preached at the house of Jacob Wheeler

at Hauppauge, and his diary says: "I preached at the meeting house," (probably the school house) at 3 P. M.

This seems to have been the great "three day meeting" as the farmers and their families gathered from miles around to hear the *word* from the circuit preacher, who brought them news of the world at large, as well as of the world to come. These gatherings later became known as "quarterly meetings," at which the presiding elder often accompanied the circuit preacher. On these occasions whole families would congregate from Comac, Smithtown Landing, Great Pond, Stoney Brook, Drowned-Meadow and Islip.

These quarterly meetings became famous especially in the Smithtown Circuit of which Hauppauge Church was the strongest in membership, and as the parsonage built in 1836, at a cost of \$517.12½, was located here, it is fair to presume it was the centre of the circuit, Islip and Drowned-Meadow being the most remote villages on the list of charges. This parsonage was the preachers' residence for many years. When changes came, the society sold it to Francis Adriance who lived there until his death. It is still standing and in possession of the family.

In 1807 Luman Andrus was sent out by conference to the Long Island Circuit. He was followed successively by H. Redfield and Francis Ward, whose body with that of his son lies buried near the north end of the church in the burying ground.



The grave of the first pastor of the church, the Rev. Francis Ward.  
Died April 22, 1814, aged 39.

At the burial, Francis Ward's widow standing by the side of the open grave, exhorted the large company to prepare for death and judgement to come. Mrs. Ward later married John Arcularius, a noted N. Y. grocer, whose family still conduct the business. In 1810 the name of the circuit was changed to Suffolk, being now divided from Hempstead and the Western town. In 1811 Ezekiel Canfield, 1812 Samuel Bushnell, 1813 Francis Ward, a second time. In 1814 the circuit was renamed Suffolk and Sag Harbor with Charles W. Carpenter as preacher; 1815, John Reynolds; 1817 and 1818, William Jewett; 1819, Samuel Cochran; 1820 and 1821, Reuben Harris; 1822 and 1823, Humphrey Humphries, Jacob Hall and William M. Willett; 1824, John W. LeFevre; 1826 and 1827, Cyrus Foss (the father of our beloved Bishop Cyrus D. Foss) who served one year with Noble W. Thomas. Then followed O. V. Ammerman and C. W. Carpenter in 1828 and Josiah Bowen in 1829 and 1830. In 1833 the circuit was narrowed down and named Smithtown Circuit. Continuing as such until 1879 when Lake Grove (formerly great pond) Hauppauge and Saint James were made a circuit with parsonage at Lake Grove, and Smith A. Sands as circuit preacher.

Following Mr. Sands were: Rev.'s John T. Langlois, Sylvester Smith, John F. Duinkerke, James S. Haugh, E. J. Curtis, J. N. Crane, T. B. Cornell, Wm. N. Taft, Fred Gunton, Wm. N. Taft (a second time), H. E. Marsland, Fredk. Buckwalter and R. W. Thompson in 1906. The present board of trustees are: B. F. Prince, *Pres't*; Simeon Wood, *Sec. and Treasurer*; William Olivie, Wm. E. Hubbs, Lewis Abrams and I. B. Pedrick.

Board of stewards: J. B. Pedrick, Mrs. Law Land, Mrs. Simeon Wood, Mrs. Lewis Abrams, Miss Kate Mosely, William Olivie.

*Supt.* of Sunday School.....Benj. F. Prince  
*Pres't* Epworth League.....O. G. Chichester  
*Pres't* Junior League.....Mrs. Law Land  
*Pres't* Ladies Auxillary..Mrs. D. B. Gardiner  
*Pres't* Cemetery Assn....Wallace Donaldson

While the circuit remained as Smithtown Circuit, its preachers were successively: J. Lovejoy, Francis Hill, Daniel Jones, Wm. K. Stopford, John B. Merwin, Bezaliel Howe, John



The Methodist Parsonage. built in 1836, and used as such for thirty years.





Nixon, Theron Osborn, Samuel W. King, Elbert Osborn, Nathan Rice, George Hollis and Ezra Jagger.

In 1849 the New York East Conference having been formed, Smithtown became part of that Conference with preachers Eben S. Heberd, Wm. Gothard, Joseph Wildey, Robert Codling, W. Wake, E. K. Fanning, D. F. Hallock, J. H. Stansbury, Charles Stearns, Benj. Redford and S. Kristeller, most of whom served two years.

The period since 1880, with its joys and sorrows, its upliftings and downcastings, is still fresh in present day memory.

Hauppauge has flourished spiritually and financially. Several bequests from old friends and members of the society have placed it in comfortable, if not independent, circumstances, with ample funds in its treasury to carry on the work of the fathers.

The following is from a sketch by the late Isaac W. Blydenburg: "In 1812 the Church was built on the present site. The ground being given by Joshua Smith. The sides and roof were covered with 3 foot shingles. For seats, slabs with legs on them and no back to lean against. Two doors in front. One for women and one for men. They had no fire. Women used to carry foot stoves. Tin box, with a frame around it, put a cup of coals with plenty of ashes in, and the women sat with their feet on that to keep warm. Women sat on the east side and men on the west until the early '60s.

In March, 1828, the church, which had for sixteen years remained unfinished in its interior, except for its high pulpit, level with the gallery and reached by a stairway, also the aforementioned slab seats, having become out of date, it was decided to plaster the inside walls and galleries.

In 1861 the shingles, being storm worn, were removed and replaced with clapboard siding, and the window frames were extended full length to cover the gallery windows, as well as those below, and blinds were added which cost \$300. In 1865 the church was comfortably resealed and a new pulpit with aisle carpet and box stoves to burn wood at a cost of \$900.

In 1895 the steeple was erected and church painted outside and inside costing \$1050.

In the same year a memorial window was placed behind the pulpit in memory of Mary J. Brush, who was a daughter of

Elkanah Wheeler and who left a legacy to the church. Other liberal legacies have been received from estates of Owen Westlake and Frances Hoyt.

Among the ancient belongings of the church is an old bible now in the Sunday School library in which is inscribed: "This bible belongs to the Methodist Meeting house at the Hauppauqs. A present from Caleb Smith, Esq., November, 1812." The original hymn book is lost, but one of later date is inscribed "presented to the Methodist Episcopal Church, Hauppauge, L. I. by Mrs. Dr. Nichols, Jan. 1st, 1868."

The original collection box, inscribed "Box for taking collection in the church in Hauppogue, L. I., 1807," has also been secured from a collection of relics belonging to Wesley J. Wheeler of Islip, L. I., who is a grand son of Elkanah Wheeler, one of the founders.

This box is a simple home-made affair, but its age and genuineness is apparent from its inscription and its time-stained appearance.

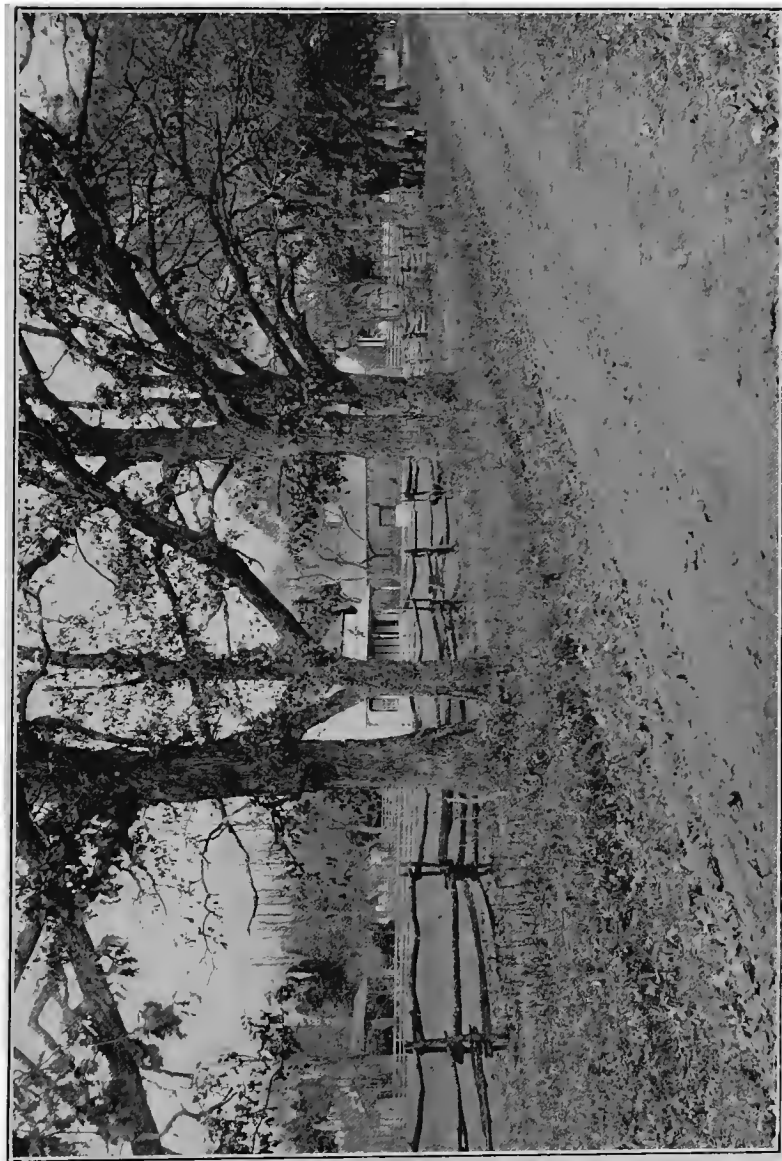
The One Hundredth Anniversary of this church recalls some amusing incidents.

The singing in the church was congregational. A leader setting the tune by tuning fork and the accompanying do-re-sol-do, but in the late 40s some of the singers thought they should have instrumental music. So on a fine Sunday afternoon the congregation were startled by the rasping of bow and strings in the gallery.

Many heads were shaken with disapproval of this "Devil Music" and after a few Sundays' trial the bass-viol and fiddle were abandoned and a return made to the leader and his tuning fork.

The earliest musical instrument after this experiment was a rather wheezy melodian which did duty till it was later replaced by an organ, which has led the singing successfully through many storms and difficulties.

This history would hardly be complete were it not in some way to call attention to the large burial ground where lie the dust of generations. Previous to the time when Judge Smith gave the plot of ground on which the church stands, each land owner had his own burial plot in some corner of his farm where



The Oaks near the Church, reserved by the late Judge Joshua Smith as a shade for the tying place for horses and used as such until the Church sheds were built.



his family and those of his neighbors who had no burial place were interred.

About 1845 the trustees of the society became aware that the church grounds were fast being filled up and more ground would be required. Judge Smith, who had donated the ground for the Church yard, having died, his son, Joshua B. Smith, had come into ownership, and following his father's example gave the trustees the land in the rear to the top of the hill, thereby enlarging the plot to its present bounds. A subscription list for building a substantial fence around the new grounds was made in this year amounting to \$50. In this subscription paper suitable mention was made of the gift from Mr. Smith. The Joshua Smith family were Presbyterians and belonged to the Smithtown Church, but were always friendly to the Methodists, and besides the gifts of land hardly a subscription list was passed around that did not contain the name of this generous friend in its subscribers.

The Methodist Circuit rider found a warm welcome at this Presbyterian fireside. The old judge enjoyed the prayers and exhortations of the Methodist parson and was a frequent visitor to the Methodist service.

So solicitous was Judge Smith for the welfare of the society that he caused the fence along the highway to be moved back so that horses could be tied in the shade of that noble row of old oaks to the west of the church yard, and when the property was sold this reservation was made for all time. For sixty years these oaks were the only sheds the church goers' animals had, and although no longer used for that purpose, the row of oaks still vigorously stand stretching out their protecting branches to recall the time when poverty forbade the luxury of horse sheds, and as a living monument to him whose thoughtfulness placed them to the use of the public. Romantically considered, if trees could talk, they would tell of the ardent but youthful swains, momentous question, "May I see you home?" followed by that embarrassing interval, till maiden fair gave the desired consent. When he proceeded to put the precepts of the Church in practice in his endeavor to "love his neighbor as himself," and escort her to the parental front gate.

When the Smith farm was about to pass out of the hands of

the family, the remains of those members of the family who had been buried in the plot on the farm were disinterred and placed in a plot in the northeast corner of the new church burial ground.

The funerals of that day were simple in the extreme, but were made occasions when the entire neighborhood turned out, and not a farmer who owned a vehicle failed to bring along his less fortunate neighbor to join the procession, which in many instances was half a mile in length. The "Old Ark" of some farmers could comfortably carry a dozen, three on a seat. The wagons were without springs. In this manner the mourning family were escorted to the church yard.

The coffin (there were no caskets in those days) was usually made by some carpenter who with steaming box and stain made up a good enough coffin. The cost of the whole outfit being within five dollars. A fitting commentary on the useless extravagance of the present day.

The "Donation Party" was a feature also, when potatoes, turnips and pork were turned into the dominie's cellar and wood carted to his yard. The congregation brought victuals also, most of which were consumed on the spot before the donators left the parsonage, and lucky was the parson's wife if the donation left supplies enough to carry the family over Sunday. These were in the good old time and fortunately the wants of the preacher and his family were simple and few.

The wearing of flowers, ribbons and feathers by the women was not encouraged. The bonnets of the strictest of the sect being either black or drab and shaped after the manner of the orthodox quaker.

The men wore wide stiff stocks around their collar, or a neckerchief wound two or three times about the neck outside the collar, which was of the shape that pointed up on either side of the ears and had tie strings instead of buttons. These with the shad bellied coat and broad brim hat made up the costume of the orthodox Methodist brother of a century ago.

Next to the Quarterly Meeting and perhaps more important as leading to the spiritual growth of the church was the protracted meeting of the olden time. These meetings were usually held during the winter months. The crops were all in. The corn was

husked. Feeding the stock, cutting wood and a few general chores was all that was to be done from week to week.

The long nights with only candles to dimly light the room for reading, and the only books, after the Bible and hymn book, were "Baxter's Saints' Rest," "Autobiography of Hester Ann Rogers," "Nelson's Cause and Cure of Infidelity," and the farmer's almanac, with an occasional newspaper. There was ample time now for the soul's introspection. Then the protracted meeting came along. The young folks could stay out late if they were "tending meeting." Six nights in every week. Saturday the preacher rested and prepared his sermons and exhortations for the next week's campaign.

These meetings began by stirring up the Brethern, calling on them to rally to the work of saving sinners, by prayer and fasting and full consecration. Sermons to the young and careless warning them to flee from the wrath to come when the world "should be rolled up as a scroll and burned."

The judgment day was pictured out with Gabriel and his trumpet. Resurrection of the dead was made so vivid that but little imagination was required to feel that in the graveyard outside the windows, already a rising was begun. Appeals to the better nature also, reminding the sinner of prayers of mothers and sisters, some of whom had already crossed the deep, dark river. They were urged to meet the loved ones in the New Jerusalem, where in houses, not made with hands, they should dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Now, an old fashioned hymn with a tune so easy that all could join in the swaying air:

"Come, humble sinners, in whose breast  
A thousand thoughts revolve,  
Come with your guilt and fear oppressed  
And make this last resolve."

"I'll go to Jesus though my sin  
Like mountains round me close,  
I know his courts I'll enter in  
Whatever may oppose."

No feeble sentimental verse for these earnest Methodists. The hymns of the Wesleys, John and Charles were good enough for them, and when the spirit has moved the multitude to their knees, so that saint and sinner are joining their supplication, someone start that poetic prayer of John Wesley, and in a low, sweet strain the kneeling congregation chant :

“Take my poor heart and let it be  
Forever closed to all but thee,  
Seal thou my breast and let me wear  
That pledge of love forever there.”

Who does not recall the sweet extacy of the gathered multitude as one after another poor sinner lets go his hold on the sinful world and “goes forward” amid the amens and glory hallelujahs of the brethern? The Lord is moving among his people. Sisters go down after brothers, mothers after sons. Even sweethearts after the backward swain. Prayers, groans, songs of glory, shouts of victory. The tide sets heavenward. Sinners are coming home. The backslider hastens back to the father’s fold. Now again they sing :

“Just as I am without one plea,  
But that thy blood was shed for me,  
And that thou bidd’st me come to thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.”

Pleading, trusting, rejoicing. The awakening is complete. No reckoning is being made of time as it passes. Sinners are coming home. Fathers and mothers in Israel are wrestling like Jacob for a blessing that will not be denied.

Sisters’ tears and pleadings are invincible, and when the hymn is sung :

“Depth of mercy can there be,  
Mercy still reserved for me.”

There comes to this waiting assemblage “that peace that passeth understanding.”



Ten, eleven o'clock passes. The candles burn low, and yet the pentecostal fire burns brighter. One after another seeker rises and proclaims himself "saved by grace." Songs of praise.

"I am coming Lord, coming now to thee,  
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood that flowed on Calvary."

New converts go down after their former associates, who have not yet yielded. With arms thrown about them and pleading entreaty the trembling sinner casts himself at the altar. The most hardened ones submit to this fresh onslaught of the victorious hosts of the Lords right hand. Now the fire breaks out afresh. New converts are surrounding the hosts of the devil. Victory perches on their banners. The sinner surrenders. The devil fears and trembles. The wicked flee to the open air, or stumble to the mourners' bench. Can this host of the Lord, now almost beside itself and exultant with victory, break up until every soul is garnered in the fold. 'Tis two much to expect. How many nights has the devil laid wait till morning to catch the victim in his web?

Shall we undertake to dam the flowing torrent, which brings the lambs to the masters fold? Let the stream flow on. Let us gather in the sheaves. Let us work while the spirit pleads, while the waters of the pool are troubled, for the Lord is in his holy temple.

This was the old time protracted meeting with its blessed memories, when the saints renewed their strength and the church was quickened in its spiritual life. Will they come again? Yes, perhaps, somewhat changed in form, but

"We'll praise him for all that is past,  
And trust him for all that's to come."





The Old School House as it now stands.

The first place of worship at Hauppauge, in which articles of incorporation were drawn up and executed, May 13th, 1806.







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One hundred years of Methodism st Haappa



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