

EARLY HISTORY

The influence of Christians moving into central Michigan spread into the northwestern part of the L.P., where the major economic interest was lumbering. Leading Restoration figures in the area included L. O. Drew, C. W. Gardner, H. E. Rossell, William Gray, and O.B. Little.

Former slave and minister Thomas Cross established a church nine miles south of Barryton (Mecosta Co.) in 1869 and later preached at Barryton. The church began in Barryton proper on 1871 with the assistance of Charles Gardner, Civil War veteran and itinerant preacher. Among the first members were the families of Marvin Rogers, Daniel Allen, William Brown, and John Gibbs. The beginning of a lumber mill in the community in 1894 brought growth to the church. The congregation met in a log school and in the town hall before 1900, when land for a building was donated in honor of Rogers and his daughter. The town's second postmaster, Abel Mudge (1901-4), was the minister who encouraged the members to build. H. E. Rossell also preached at Barryton, as did numerous part-time preachers who were permanent residents of the community: B. D. Bright, Charles McKay, and George J. Start. Perry Brown was a preaching elder. Later preachers for the church were R. A. Tybus (before 1900) and Duncan McLachlen (1905-8).

In Mecosta County churches were begun at Big Rapids (1871), Bells Corners (1880), Emerald Lake (1883), Crapo (1885), Mosley (1885), Fork (1886), Hinton (1886), and Chippeway Lake (1892). These all seem to have died with the lumbering industry within a few years. Little activity was apparent in Clare and Roscommon counties where only three late churches are known, including Bankins (1893) and Markley (1905).

A church of nine members was organized at Kalkaska by N. N. Allen and C. W. Gardner in 1888. The church assembled first in the GAR Hall, then constructed a small building. By year's end the membership had grown to 20. By 1890 the membership was 42. Gardner was the first minister. By 1892, during the ministry of H. E. Russell, a larger building was built. Later ministers included J. B. Jefferson, Dr. Butler, who served as pastor for a year so the preacher's salary could purchase pews, Henry H. Halley (author of Halley's Bible Handbook) and John Meise. Halley memorized the entire Bible and led the congregation to over 100 members. Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. Cowan, Hattie and Jein Crawford, Lafayette and Mary Custer, Clara Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Del Williams, and Jenny Woodreeff.

Other churches which started following the movement of the lumbering industry were at Fremont (1866), Lake (Clare Co.; 1869), Newaygo (1869), Brookside (1870), and Denver (1871). The church had already begun farther north at Antrim (Antrim Co.) in 1867. In Lake County, Luther began in 1871 and Ellsworth (Antrim Co.) in 1872. Manistee also started in 1872.

When William Gray became active in the Wexford County area in the 1880s, nine churches had already been started, including Manton (1875), Hoxeyville (1875), Haire (1876), and Greenwood (1878). Pleasant Lake was started in 1884, folowed by Selma (1889), Haring (1892), Cherry Grove (1893), Caddilac (1894), and Mesick (1894). In Manistee County there were churches at Arcadia and Blaine (1878); in Missaukee County there were Lake City (1878) and Pioneer (1878). Grand Traverse had churches at Stacy's Corners (1878) and Traverse City (1899). Congregations were found in Kalkaska County at Baker Creek (1889), Excelsior (1894), Rapid City (1901), and Spenser (1905). Benzie County had churches at Herring Lake (1894) and Lake Ann (1894). Jennings was founded in Missaukee County in 1905.

In the far north of the L.P., churches were started in Charlevoix and Emmet counties at Springdale (1889), Petosky (1893), Oden (1900), Crooked Lake (1903), Van (1903), Bellaire (1902), and Chestonia (1904). A total of 35 congregations had been formed.

Summary. Between 1860 and 1890 there were 190 congregations planted in Michigan. The decline of lumbering industry caused the demise of 140 of these churches in the early 1900s. From 1870 to 1900 northwestern Michigan was booming. However, by 1920 the emphasis had changed from growth to preservation.

DEVELOPMENT OF CADILLAC
IN THE EARLY YEARS

In the Spring of 1969 the elders of the Highland congregation in Detroit met with four Christians from the Cadillac Area in the interest of establishing a work in Cadillac. The property on West Division was then purchased. The Church began meeting on a regular basis in August of 1969. At that time two families were known to be members who lived in Cadillac. Three other families were living in Manton.

Larry Harris was Cadillac's first evangelist. Here are Larry's words as he reflects over the work in 1970. "We are greatly encouraged by the growth and interest manifested thus far. We would rejoice if we were growing faster, but believe it will take some time getting established in the community and establish a firm foundation upon which to build. To date we have baptized 24. Fourty seven have been part of the work since January 1970. Twenty four are no longer affiliated with us. (various reasons) Twenty three (23) members on roll at present. Eleven of this number were baptized and one restoration, five are unfaithful, three unable to attend for health reasons. Fifteen faithful members and their children along with local and out of town guests give us an average attendance of 35-40.

Personal work has been encouraged and almost everyone has been successful in getting others to attend and Bible study sessions started. Spiritual growth is evident among all members and enthusiasm is a key to the drive of these dedicated, involved Christians. Come to see us!!

Contribution will average \$100 or better per week. Our budget for 1972 is \$130 per week."

Building: The members did most on the building with the exception of the brick work. The building will seat 200 with chairs. It has four classrooms, a nursery, foyer, office, restrooms, kitchen, baptistery, and dressing rooms. We still have several little jobs to finish as the trim work etc.