

fellowship meeting, which is the governing body of the local church, and the gymanva have the prominence.

The early fathers of Calvinistic Methodism in America were scrupulous in their adherence to the polity of the denomination in Wales in all matters so far as conditions in the new environment would permit. The gymanva in Wales was held quarterly. It was called the "quarterly gymanva." The presbytery in Wales was held monthly and was called the "monthly meeting." The early gymanvas in America were also held quarterly and were called quarterly meetings, or quarterly gymanvas. The nearest approach to the monthly meeting in point of frequency was the "six-weeksly meeting" (*cyfarfod chwe'wythnosol*). Such meetings prevailed for many years in the East, but were later changed to bimonthly, then to quarterly, and finally to semiannual meetings of the presbyteries.

With this general statement pertaining to the organizations of the Calvinistic Methodist Church we now turn to a brief account of the six gymanvas, together with the presbyteries and the churches within them.

VI. THE NEW YORK GYMANVA

SO MUCH has been written in the foregoing pages about the New York Gymanva, as the beginning of the Calvinistic Methodist Church in America, that nothing more need be added except perhaps to state that during the first few years the churches in Pennsylvania were closely associated with and under the paternal protection of New York, but were never regarded as a separate presbytery. They were simply a group of churches that formed a part of the three-cornered gymanva of New York, namely, the Oneida County group, the Pennsylvania group, and the church in New York City.

The first gymanva was held in Penyaerau Church, Oneida County, in 1828, and for over one hundred years its sessions continued to be held in unbroken succession. Even after the Calvinistic Methodist Church united with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1920, its gymanvas and presbyteries were kept intact, except where there was direct conflict with the polity and usage of the Presbyterian Church, as in the case of the New York City Presbytery (C.M.) where a single church session constituted a presbytery. Great gymanvas were held and the multitudes frequented them. For several early decades the Remsen region in Oneida County was the Mecca, but in later decades Utica became the center of Welsh activity.

At first the gymanvas were held quarterly. Repeated attempts to reduce the number of the sessions failed. To reduce their number was difficult because, when it came to a vote of the churches, the people declined to have them reduced. In the early 1860's the number still remained four gymanvas and six "six-weeksly," or presbytery, meetings in the year. But in 1865 the break was made and the gymanvas were reduced from four to three. The "six-weeksly" meetings,¹ however, were continued at the former rate,

¹ The name "six-weeksly" meeting held over even when the meetings were held bimonthly, and the quarterly presbytery meeting was called the bimonthly meeting for many years after it became quarterly. In function they were all the equivalent of presbytery meetings.

but in a few years they became bimonthly and then quarterly. In 1892 the number was reduced from four to three each year; later semiannual sessions of the presbytery were held.

THE ONEIDA COUNTY PRESBYTERY

No definite date of the organization of this presbytery is obtainable, but there existed an institution of the churches in Oneida County which partook of the functions of a presbytery. This institution was called "Vestry Remsen," and it played an important rôle in the beginning of church life and activity in the Oneida County group of churches. Vestry Remsen, or the Remsen Vestry, was organized on February 26, 1824, in the small cottage of Moses Jones. When the Remsen Vestry was organized, it had neither a church edifice nor a cemetery to supervise or care for, but was organized as a trusteeship by forward-looking men who were planning, with a broad outlook, the foundations of the future Calvinistic Methodist Church in America. This trusteeship was formed in accordance with the law of the State of New York, and held meetings annually on the second Tuesday in February at eleven A.M. The meetings were held in accordance with notice duly given. They were opened with devotions, and the first order of business was the election of officers—a chairman, a secretary, and a treasurer. The vestry was made up of laymen. The first members, elected in 1824, were James Owen, Evan Griffiths, and Hugh Owen. Later, when churches multiplied, the number of trustees was increased to nine, in three classes; one class of three trustees was elected each year to serve for three years. The vestry in later years was made up of the elders—and perhaps trustees—of the several local churches in the vicinity of Remsen.

Just when the annual meetings of the vestry came to be held in the Stone Church, in the village of Remsen, is not known. The Stone Church was built in 1831, but the vestry was organized a number of years previously. It may have been moved to Remsen soon after the erection of the Stone Church. Hence the name Vestry Remsen.² In the published report of the meeting for February, 1847, the following introductory sentence is found:

² "Remsen" here may refer to the township rather than to the village.

"The annual meeting of the officers of the Welsh Whitefield Methodist churches in Remsen, Trenton, Steuben, and Floyd [Townships] convened according to previous notice given, . . . in the Stone Church, Remsen."

In the report for 1850 the introductory sentence is even more explicit and reads:

"The vestry, or annual meeting, of the first society of the Whitefield Methodists [Calvinistic] in the townships of Remsen, Trenton, Steuben, Floyd," et cetera.

The vestry exercised a great deal of authority. It had two important standing committees: one on churches and church property, and the other on cemeteries and their upkeep. It kept close supervision of the churches and a minute oversight of the cemeteries. The location of a proposed new church was a concern of the vestry, and the building of it was supervised by its trustees. Thus we read that a special meeting was held on December 27, 1827, in the home of Henry Prichard (Ty Howel) for the purpose of planning a house of worship in Remsen Township on the main highway of the state. The question of having such a new church was put by the chair, and the motion prevailed. The next question was that of materials: Should it be made of logs or should it be a frame church? The latter was decided upon. Then came the election of trustees for the newly proposed church, when Robert G. Jones and Robert Charles were elected. This was the beginning of Penygraig Church, which was built in 1828.

On the recommendation of its committee on churches, the vestry ordered the trustees of a local church to attend to certain needed repairs, and likewise the trustees of a local church cemetery to keep the cemetery fence in good repair. In the vestry meeting of 1851, trustees of local churches where building or repairs were anticipated were enjoined to "consult the vestry trustees before letting out work, so that no advantage be taken because of the ignorance of trustees, with the result that the work and materials be inferior to the contract price; and the denomination, consequently, be the loser."

There are references to the Rome Vestry and the Utica Vestry, as well as to Remsen Vestry. In 1850 the Floyd Church was transferred to the Rome Vestry. So Rome and Utica were centers, like

Remsen, where a trusteeship had supervision over churches in the immediate vicinity. But the original vestry in Oneida County—which performed a great service during the first thirty years or more—was the Remsen Vestry.

The vestry was in complete control of external affairs, and the "six-weeksly" meeting supplied the inspiration and cared for the spiritual welfare of the churches. The two combined performed all the work of a presbytery. So it is not amiss to date the organization of the Oneida County Presbytery from the organization of the Remsen Vestry on February 26, 1824, and the "six-weeksly" meeting, which was of a very early date. As time went on the functions of each were merged, and thus the Oneida County Presbytery, as it was known in later years, came into existence.

CHURCHES OF ONEIDA PRESBYTERY

Penycaerau Church. This, as we have already observed, was the first Calvinistic Methodist church in America to have a continued existence for a long period of time. It was organized in 1824 under the rules governing the Calvinistic Methodist Church in Wales, and was admitted as a member of the denomination in the old country. It was also organized according to the law governing religious bodies in the State of New York, with trustees duly elected and holding regular meetings. The first elders were James Owen, Lewis Lewis, and H. Owen. The first trustees were James Owen, Evan Griffiths, and H. Owen. The church was dissolved about 1907.

Penygraig Church. This in all probability was the second church of the denomination to be organized in Oneida County. The arrangements for organizing this church and for erecting a church edifice were made at a special meeting of the Remsen Vestry on December 2, 1827. Services had been held in the neighborhood previously, but the worshippers held their membership in Penycaerau until the new church was built. Penygraig Church was organized with fourteen charter members. The first elders were John Davis, W. S. Prichard, and Edward Jarmon. A second church was built on the same site in 1845. The church has been dissolved.

Hebron Church (French Road). Hebron Church was organized in 1828. A church edifice was built the same year. The first elder was Evan Thomas. Hebron Church was dissolved in 1928, one hundred years after its organization, and the property was purchased by Augustine L. Richards, of New York City, who remodeled it at his own expense and then made it available to the Presbyterian Church for use, when desired, for religious purposes exclusively.

Nant Church. Nant Church was organized in 1828. The church edifice was built the same year. A new church was erected in 1856. The first elders were Evan Jones and T. Richards. Another early elder was Robert Owen; then came two brothers, Hugh and John Hughes, who served the church well for many years. Richard D. Davies was made an elder in 1860, at the age of thirty, and served as an elder in Nant for sixty-two years. Nant was famous for the prominence of its elders. Rev. William G. Pierce, who came to America in 1795 and to Steuben Township in 1801, lived near Nant Church, and his dust rests in the Nant cemetery. The church is still active.

Moriah Church, Utica. The Calvinistic Methodist church in Utica, in the southern part of Oneida County, occupied a place similar to that of Penycaerau in the north and was the mother of many churches. Utica was a prominent Welsh center at an early day and has remained so to the present time. Prominent and influential men of Welsh nationality have lived there from the very beginning of Welsh activities in New York State. Their influence has been far-reaching and they have contributed substantially to every phase of national life in both Church and State. Among those prominent in the affairs of State was Hon. Ellis H. Roberts, one-time Postmaster-General of the United States, and among churchmen the name of William Henry Roberts, D.D., LL.D., for thirty-five years the stated clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, is well known. His father, William Roberts, D.D., was the honored and revered pastor of the Utica Church for fourteen years.

The first Welsh church in Utica was a Baptist church, organized in 1801, with twenty-two charter members. Then followed the Welsh Congregational church, organized in 1802, with a charter

membership of fourteen. It was composed of members from both Congregational and Calvinistic Methodist Churches of Wales, and for many years Calvinistic Methodists who came to Utica identified themselves with this church in the city. Some of the deacons in the Congregational church had been elders of the Calvinistic Methodist Church in Wales. With the passing of time, many Calvinistic Methodists had come to Utica, and in 1830 they peaceably withdrew to form a society of their own.

Evan Roberts, who came to Utica in 1822, united with the Congregational church upon his arrival. Two years later he was made a deacon of the church and served as a faithful officer for five years. Fundamentally Mr. Roberts was a Calvinistic Methodist and, when he observed that many of the new arrivals in the city were of a like faith, he invited a group into his own home for prayer and discussed with them the advisability of forming their own society. This was the beginning of the Calvinistic Methodist Church in Utica. An appeal was made to the bimonthly meeting held in Remsen on February 20, 1830, for a church, and during the first week in March of the same year a committee was appointed to organize such a church there. It was organized with twelve charter members, namely, Mr. and Mrs. Evan Roberts, Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Richard H. Hughes, Mr. and Mrs. David Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Evan Ellis, Mr. and Mrs. David Williams, all of whom were from North Wales. The services of the infant church were first held on Bleeker Street, and the men on the circuit—Rev. David Stephens, Rev. Benjamin Davies, and Rev. W. T. Williams—from the Penyaerau vicinity came there on occasion to preach. In 1831 their first church was built on Seneca Street. In 1846 the second church was built on the same site, and was dedicated on January 27-28, 1847. The communicant membership at that time was one hundred and ninety. Shifts and changes occurred in subsequent years. Many new arrivals came from Wales, some of whom remained permanently, but many, after remaining a brief period, left for other parts; it was the period of western migration. New churches in the communities adjacent to Utica were also being organized. Due to such unstable conditions, together with a changing environment

in the Seneca Street location, the church had not increased numerically in thirty years. The membership in 1877 was practically the same as that of 1847.

When the second church was built in 1846 the Welsh population for the most part lived in that vicinity, but in later years the Welsh moved uptown. The far-visioned among the leaders realized that if the church was to survive and prosper a house of worship should be built in a more central place. In 1882 a lot was purchased on Park Avenue, the site of the present church, and the new church was dedicated September 23 to October 1, 1883. Two prominent ministers from Wales, Rev. David Saunders and Rev. Thomas Job, participated in the dedication.

The first elder of the Utica Church was Evan Roberts. Robert J. Jones and Richard H. Hughes were soon added to the session. Other elders of the old church on Seneca Street were Humphrey D. Roberts, David F. Jones, Evan Jones, John I. Davies, David Anthony, Richard E. Roberts, and T. Solomon Griffiths. Some were called to serve who had previously been elders in Wales.

T. Solomon Griffiths was an elder of great prominence and large influence, a man of stately bearing and fine appearance. He was a fluent and persuasive speaker, a zealous Calvinistic Methodist with a passion for missions. Mr. Griffiths' influence extended far beyond his own church in Utica. His leadership was recognized in the presbytery and gymanva, and indeed throughout the denomination in America. The highest honor within the power of the Church to bestow was given to him when he was made moderator of the Welsh General Assembly in 1910. He also served as its treasurer for many years. He was elected business manager of *The Friend*, and was for a period of years its editor.

The church in Utica continues to be a strong and influential church.

Stone Church (Capel Ceryg), Remsen. Stone Church, in the village of Remsen, was built in 1831. Over the entrance there is an inscription carved in stone which serves as a fine illustration of the Whitefield emphasis so much coveted by the early fathers of the Church in America. The inscription reads as follows³:

³ The inscription in translation reads, "This house was built by the Welsh Calvinistic (Whitefield) Methodists to worship the Lord in the year 1831."

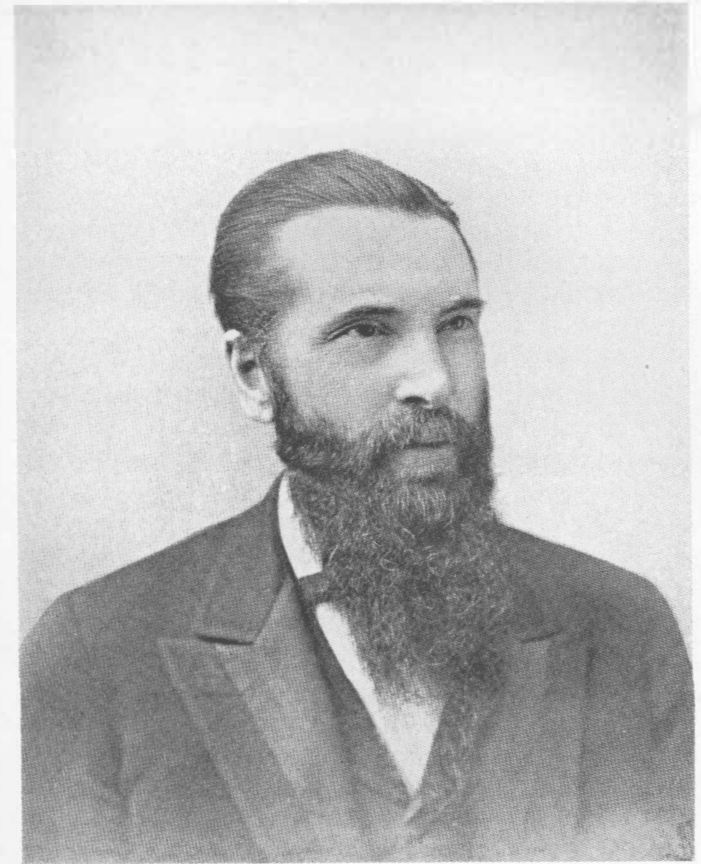
“Adeiladwyd y Ty Hwn
 “gan y Trefnyddion (Whitefield)
 “Calфинаidd Cymreig
 “i addoli'r Arglwydd yn y flwyddyn
 “1831”

The original Stone Church still stands, a fine structure in a good state of preservation, and is the home of a loyal people, some of whose ancestors came to the Remsen vicinity with the earliest arrivals—in 1798-1800. The first elder was G. Jones. Other early elders were Hugh Hughes, Owen O. Owens, and Jenkin Jones. Rev. Morris Roberts and Rev. Benjamin Davies were the local preachers when the church was organized.

Floyd Church. The church in Floyd was organized in 1839. Rev. Henry Rees and Rev. Moses Parry, the first commissioners from the Church in Wales to the Church in America, were present at its organization. The meeting was held in the home of William Owen, where the first Sunday School was held. The first fellowship meeting convened in the home of Edward R. Jones, the poet. We have failed to find a record of the names of the first elders, but some of the early elders were John Edwards, William Phillips, John Lewis, and Robert Owen. The first church was built in 1839-1840, and a new church was erected, near the site of the first, in 1864. The church continues its service.

Holland Patent Church. This church was organized in 1840. The Meredith family was prominent in Holland Patent from the beginning, and for several years services were held in the Meredith home. On September 3-4, 1844, the church was dedicated and was named Zion. At first there were no ruling elders, the only elder being Rev. Robert Meredith. Ruling elders were soon elected, namely, M. J. Meredith, Ebenezer Jones, and Griffith Meredith. The church was dissolved in 1905, when the few remaining members were given letters of transfer to the Congregational Church.

Rome Church. Rome Church was organized in 1841. William Williams, who came from Anglesey in 1831, started the church in Rome. There were only two Welsh families there at the time, those of William Williams and Hugh Williams, and the only worship in Welsh was at the family altar. An appeal made to the



T. SOLOMON GRIFFITHS

gymanva requesting a preaching service once a month was granted and soon a church was organized. Services were begun on December 6, 1841, when ten people were present at the home of William Williams. Rev. William Rowlands, then of Utica, preached to them. After they had worshiped in their homes and in the public school building for about six months they learned that an English church edifice was for sale, and the Calvinistic Methodist Society purchased it. On December 16-17, 1847, they entertained the New York Gymanva and the church was then dedicated.

Rome is situated about fifteen miles west of Utica and is a center of Welsh church activity for that section. The first elders were William Williams, John L. Jones, and William N. Jones. Other early elders were Moses S. Jones and Robert R. Meredith. Elder William N. Jones was one of the most useful elders in the Church in America in his day. He represented the New York Gymanva as ruling elder at the organization of the Welsh General Assembly in 1869. The church at Rome is still flourishing.

The Sixty-six Church. There was a church organized at a location called "Sixty-six" as early as 1841. Of its early elders and membership we have no record.

Salem Church, Herkimer County. The church at Salem, sometimes called Newport Church, was organized in 1842, and the edifice was dedicated September 6-7, 1842. In 1859 Newport was under the care of Home Missions and was reported as having six members. After 1860 the name was dropped from the list.

Bryn Mawr Church (Deerfield). A small Welsh colony was established on the hills not far from Utica, in Deerfield Township, as early as 1840. John Watkins, who came to Utica in 1831, moved to the Bryn Mawr neighborhood in 1832 and was influential in the organization of the church, which was affectionately known as John Watkins' Church. It was started as a branch of the Utica Church. The first services were held in his log house and continued there for a number of years. The church was built in 1841 and was paid for the same year. In 1855 the church was remodeled and enlarged. During the period of the Civil War it declined, and after 1868, when John Watkins moved from the neighborhood, the church was soon discontinued. The first elder was John Watkins; later Benjamin Parry was elected.

Enlli Church. The Enlli Church, located about three miles south-east of the village of Remsen, was organized in 1848. Ynys Enlli is the Welsh name for the Bardsey Isle. John R. Jones, with his wife and five children, came to this neighborhood and were its first settlers. He named it Enlli after his old home. The first elders of the Enlli Church were Jenkyn Jones and James Williams. The church was transferred to the Methodist Episcopal denomination in 1920, but it is now⁴ listed with the churches of the Oneida Presbytery.

Rehoboth (Marcy) Church. This church, located about six miles northeast of Utica, was dedicated November 10, 1848. The first elders were John H. Hughes and Joseph Hughes, and in a short time Robert Phillips was made an elder. John H. Hughes later entered the ministry and went to La Crosse, Wisconsin, in 1856. The church was dissolved and the property ordered sold in 1901.

Frankfort Hill Church. The early settlers of this place worshiped in Utica, but the distance was great and travel was difficult at that time. So it became the practice of the early settlers to go to Utica Church for one service, and to hold Sunday School and prayer services in their own homes in the neighborhood or in the local public school building. After thus worshiping for some time, they organized the church on March 25, 1849, with six members, namely, Hugh Davies and his wife, Samuel Samuels, Owen Evans and his niece Sarah, and one other.

Hugh Davies was the moving spirit in Frankfort Hill Church. He had been an elder in Wales before coming to America. In many ways he was a peculiar man. In 1858 he obtained land for the building of a church. He went about to solicit subscriptions from the Welsh in the community and from the Americans as well. He could not speak English, but he learned to say "dollar" and "church," and with so much English he was a very successful solicitor among the Americans. He also employed gesture, to the extent of pointing his finger in the direction of the site of his new church. It appears that no one could refuse the old patriarch. He headed the subscription list with one hundred dollars, an immense amount for one in his circumstances in that day.

⁴ 1936.

"It was a sight to cause rejoicing among the angels," writes one, "to see his beloved wife, who was one of the earth's best, preparing milk and butter for market, and then rejoicing that she had made enough to cover the subscription to the new church, and then falling upon her knees to thank God and beseeching him to receive their humble offering."

Frankfort Hill Church was built in 1859. It was dissolved in 1920.

Oriskany Church. This church was organized in 1850. Early records are wanting and the names of the first elders are not available, but David Hughes, a man remarkable for his faithfulness, was elected elder in 1859.

Bethel Church, Bridgewater, Oneida County. This church was located about fifteen miles south of Utica. Early families in Bridgewater were those of Edward Jones, who came in 1846, John Williams, Rowland Morris, and others. These families assembled for worship in a barn on the farm of Rowland Morris. The church was organized in 1851, and an edifice was erected on land which belonged to Edward Jones. The first elders were John J. Williams and Edward Jones. The church has been dissolved.

Salem Church, Cattaraugus County. This church, organized in 1852, was located in a rural district on the western border of the State of New York. The Welsh came to the settlement in the early 1840's. W. W. Thomas, who came from Oneida County, was among the first—if not the very first—Welshman to settle here. He was present at the first religious meeting held in the settlement. The first Welsh church organized in the Cattaraugus settlement was a union church, composed of Baptists, Congregationalists, and Calvinistic Methodists. But the Baptist brethren were disinclined to indorse and support the Sunday School, and for that reason the Congregationalists and Calvinistic Methodists withdrew and worshiped in a public schoolhouse, holding Sunday School and fellowship meeting each week. Ten years after the arrival of the first settlers it is estimated that between seven and eight hundred Welsh people lived in this community, and at that time there were three Welsh churches: a Baptist, a Congregationalist, and a Calvinistic Methodist, the last of the three being the smallest.

The first elders were Benjamin Parry, who came from Oneida County and had been an elder in the Marcy Church; David Charles, who came from Newport, Oneida County, and who later left for Oshkosh, Wisconsin; and John J. Jones. The first pastor was Rev. James Lamb, in 1854. The church was received into the New York Gymanva in 1857. It was dissolved in 1920.

Nelson Church, Madison County. The report in The Church Diary for the year 1859 gives the date of the organization of Nelson Church as 1835. This, however, in all probability should be 1855. In the obituary of Elder David Hughes (in The Friend for June, 1902) it is expressly stated that Mr. Hughes came to Nelson, Madison County, in 1851, and that he and Edward Richards were coelders from the time the church was organized. Among the early families in the neighborhood were those of David Hughes, Edward Richards, William Morris, John Richards, Richard Owen, and John W. Jones. The church was dissolved in 1917, and the few members then remaining were given letters of transfer to the local Congregational church.

Salisbury Church. Next in order to Nelson Church in the Diary report for 1859 comes Salisbury Church, and the date of its organization is likewise given as 1835, which in all probability should be 1855; for Salisbury Church is reported for the first time in 1856, with a membership of fifteen, and is mentioned as a mission field under the care of the New York Gymanva. After the early 1860's the name Salisbury appears no more in the list of churches; it evidently lasted but a few years.

Plainfield Church. The Plainfield Church was organized in 1855 in a schoolhouse at Plainfield Center. The church was built in 1859. Moses Davies, who came to America in 1850 and lived some time in the vicinity of Waterville, moved to Plainfield and was instrumental in starting the Welsh church there. He was a loyal Calvinistic Methodist. The names of the first elders are not obtainable, but Moses Davies was probably one of them. Rev. John Adams was located there for a number of years. The church has been dissolved.

Webster Hill Church. Webster Hill was one of the three churches in Oneida County which were named for the hills upon which

they were located, namely, Webster Hill, Quaker Hill, and Mullen Hill. The date of the organization of this church is 1832. In the obituary of John T. Jones, of Rome, it is stated that Mr. Jones came to America from Anglesey, North Wales, in 1832 and that he was made an elder of Webster Hill Church. Perhaps he was elected first elder of the church.

In 1905 it was reported to the presbytery that there was hope for Webster Hill Church if the services were changed to English. This was done, but even then the church gradually declined. In 1920 it was dissolved and the property was turned over to the trustees of the New York Gymanva.

Quaker Hill Church. This church was organized in 1846. Thomas U. Jones, who came into the vicinity of Penygraig in 1844, started the church on Quaker Hill. Others who came at an early day to Quaker Hill were Griffith Evans and Mrs. Rebecca Evans. The first elder was Edward Lewis; soon Edward Roberts was made an elder. The church has long since been dissolved.

Mullen Hill Church. Richard R. Roberts and his wife came to Western Township in 1865 and bought a farm on Mullen Hill. They had first located on Quaker Hill, in the same township, then moved to Mullen Hill when that church was organized. The Mullen Hill society never had a church edifice, but was organized in 1878 or 1879 and was received into the Oneida County Presbytery in February, 1879. The church has been dissolved.

Delta. Humphrey Jones settled near Delta in 1847. Services were held in the neighborhood for a season. When they were discontinued Mr. Jones united with the church at Rome.

There were also several small churches, preaching points, or mission stations listed between 1850 and 1860, such as Newport, Lowville, Cassville, Welsh Bush, Little Falls, and Richfield in Lawrence County. After 1860 no more was heard of these churches.

CHURCHES IN LEWIS COUNTY, NEW YORK

While the Calvinistic Methodists in Lewis County were members of the Oneida County Presbytery, they were so far removed from the center of Oneida County activities that, as a group,