

History of the Barbours Methodist Dream 1938 through 1978

Alison S. Gregory, 1996

[Editor's note: A Lycoming College senior, Ms. Alison S. Gregory prepared this paper as part of an honors course in historical research and writing. The paper was dedicated "For Grandpa" and special acknowledgment was given to Mrs. Charles Fox, "pillar of strength in the church from 1938 to 1978, without whom the dream may have been much shorter, and without whom this history would not have been possible." We thank Ms. Gregory for permission to reprint her paper in this format.]

Nestled in a valley cut between the Allegheny Ridge and Jacoby Mountain by the Loyalsock Creek lies the tiny village of Barbours. Situated approximately twelve miles northeast of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, this mountain community at its peak was home to no more than a few dozen residents, a corner store, a fire hall, a one room school house, and two churches. The town exists today with the addition of a few more homes but without the store, the school, and one of the churches.

The beauty of this tiny community emanates from the tree lined creek, with the west bank rising to an impressive ridge. The village is predominantly residential; the only commercial activity comes from a small saw mill. Because the ecology is virtually untouched, wildlife flourishes there. Just south of Barbours is a Pennsylvania State Game Farm where pheasants are propagated. Barbours provides an ideal location for whitetail deer to live; one can hardly make a trip through the town without seeing them.

Barbours is an old and close knit community. The cemetery has headstones that are almost two hundred years old. Even though it was begun so long ago, less than half of the land in the cemetery has been used. This community is an ideal place to raise a family and be interred, knowing that the peacefulness of the town is eternal. It is no wonder that, with few exceptions, Barbours is inhabited by a few families who have been there for generations and will most likely remain there for many more.

This small village at one time had two churches, a truly remarkable thing for such a remote community. One, the Baptist, continues to meet. The other church, which was Methodist, closed its doors in the late 1970's. This paper investigates the question: what caused the dream of the Barbours Methodists to come to a close?

Prior to 1938, the two congregations shared a single building, worshipping together. Their common facility had been constructed as a Union Church, in which any denomination so inclined was welcome to worship. During the time that the Baptists and the Methodists shared the building, the Methodist congregation took the responsibility of the expenses related to the structure. They purchased supplies, paid the utilities, made necessary repairs, and took care of various other monetary burdens.¹

In 1938, the Baptists became dissatisfied with the shared services and requested that only they use the church on Sunday mornings. That left the church available for use by the Methodists and their preacher, who had to cover several churches, on Sunday afternoons. In the spring of that year, the two congregations had a

falling out. One Sunday afternoon the Methodists arrived at the building only to find several members of the Baptist church blocking the door.² And so the Methodist congregation found itself homeless.

No written or oral account could be discovered containing the specific reason for the split. There is reason to believe, however, that Pastor Wallace J. Cummings of the Methodist Church was addressing this in his report to the Fourth Quarterly Conference of 1938. Reverend Cummings wrote:

*The building committee of the Barbours Church has been rendered rather active due to the rise of certain events which have been pending rather quietly for some time now. I wish that I were able to say some of the things that I would like concerning this, but I am compelled to silence awaiting the outcome of certain moves that have been under way for some time now. The most definite thing that I dare say at present is that if present plans are carried to completion, and there is every indication that they will, the fondest dreams of the Barbours people will be realized before the summer is spent.*³

Because this report was given in March of 1938, it can be inferred that the situation to which Reverend Cummings alludes was that of the strained relationship between the Baptists and the Methodists. Relations were apparently under tension for some time prior to the split, and the Methodists were not opposed to obtaining a separate place for their worship services.

When the day finally came that the Methodists were no longer welcome to meet in the shared church, they were left little choice but to find a new place of worship. The location chosen for the new church was the former Plunkett's Creek School House.⁴ Closed in the 1930's, this school was the most feasible as well as economical option available. The congregation had the option to buy both the building, which had been owned by the Montoursville Area School District, and the land on which it sat, which was owned by Mr. Charles Whipple.

The Barbours Church did not have to face alone the task of establishing a new home. It was one of five churches bound together as the Wallis Run Charge. The other congregations on the charge were eager to assist its fifth member in its time of uncertainty. These other four churches were Beech Valley, Hoffman, Proctor and Wallis Run. Originally a group of eight churches had been separated in 1874 as the "upper" churches of the Montoursville circuit. The other three churches, which became the Loyalsock Charge, were Butternut Grove, Hoppestown and Woolevers. None of the former Loyalsock Charge churches presently exists. The Wallis Run Charge, which closed Barbours in the late 1970's and Proctor in the early 1980's, exists today with the remaining three congregations.⁵

Charges of churches are less common today than they were in years past. They were created to link people of the same denomination who shared a geographical area but worshipped in small, separate churches. Charges were useful because the individual churches, which typically had small memberships, could neither afford to provide a salary for a pastor nor provide housing for him and his family. Churches that combined to form charges joined their financial resources to hire a pastor and to purchase and maintain a parsonage. The disadvantage of charges is that they place more responsibility on the individual churches to provide some of their own ministry needs. Because the pastors of these charges have several congregations to serve, they cannot always devote to each church as much time and attention as it might need.

Charges have become less common as more small rural churches have closed their doors. As society became more urban and the advent of the automobile gave people increased mobility, growing numbers began

to work in the larger towns. With this shift in outlook, church memberships also began moving to the larger urban churches.

In 1937, under the pastorate of Reverend Wallace J. Cummings, the Barbours congregation began a building fund in order to provide a church for itself. The entire charge contributed to the fund. By 1938 a sum of \$1600 had already been raised. The existence of this fund shows that the Barbours Methodist congregation had already planned to separate from the Baptists. That the funds at the time of the split were not yet sufficient to financially handle the separation, however, indicates that the move was forced on the Methodists prior to their anticipated time line. Even so, it is remarkable for two reasons that the charge raised such a large sum. First, the Wallis Run Charge was so small in numbers; second, the people collected this money during the latter years of the Great Depression.

Beyond the money that had been raised for the actual building, the church found itself in need of additional funds for the complete remodeling and furnishing of the old schoolhouse. The congregation purchased the former school and began renovations in 1938. It took a great deal of work to transform the school into a structure appropriate for a church. One description of the church notes the following:

*The church was furnished with grand furniture and beams. Random paneling was used on the walls. Lighting fixtures harmonize with the color and styling. Sliding doors on either side of the pulpit enclose spaces for Sunday School class rooms.*⁶

Another source wrote, "The church is a beautiful frame structure 50 by 100 feet. The interior is especially attractive -- the ceiling, pulpit furniture, altar, pews and lights being in perfect harmony."⁷

The congregation set the cornerstone in May of 1938 and dedicated the new church on December 11, 1938. As part of the dedication ceremony, Williamsport District Superintendent J. Merrill Williams preached the Sunday morning sermon and conducted the dedication. Rev. Charles F. Himes, pastor of the Montoursville Methodist Church, preached the evening sermon.⁸

The remodeling and furnishings cost over \$4,000, of which the congregation raised \$2,100. This sum represented both contributions from the other churches on the charge and money from the many fundraisers the Barbours Church sponsored. These fundraisers were often in the form of socials held on the front lawn of the church, using tables brought from members' homes, because the church had no social hall or furniture for large gatherings.⁹ The remaining indebtedness of \$1,900 was handled through a loan from Mr. Charles Whipple in exchange for a mortgage on the church.¹⁰

Mr. Whipple was a millionaire lumber baron who resided in Barbours during the summer months and in Bennettsville, South Carolina, during the remaining months of the year.¹¹ Because of his lumbering business, he owned enormous tracts of land in the Barbours locale, including the plot on which the former schoolhouse stood. While the school had been in use, the Montoursville Area School District owned the building; when it went out of use, ownership reverted to Mr. Whipple. His home and servants' quarters, which were finished on the exterior with river stone and presented a grand appearance, were adjacent to the new church building.

Mr. Whipple was not considered a religious man. Although the church was adjacent to his home, he did not participate in its activities. He has been described as an occasionally difficult man with whom to work because he required proof of sincerity and worth from everyone for every reason. Mr. Whipple was none too interested in giving away his money without proof that the congregation was serious about establishing its church.¹²

As fortune would have it for the Barbours Church, Mr. Whipple's wife Maude became very involved with the congregation in its effort to develop a church. Also, Mr. Whipple's mentally handicapped daughter Grace was welcomed into the church during her visits home from the Danville Hospital. With a great deal of work and perseverance, the congregation and his own family were finally able to convince Mr. Whipple of their sincerity.¹³

Maude and Grace Whipple were truly crucial to the health of the Barbours Church. In August of 1941, three years after the building's remodeling, Mr. Whipple forgave the \$1,397 remaining on the loan by allowing his wife to burn the papers.^{14,15} Had Mr. Whipple not been so generous, the church might not have been able to open its doors when it did; had it not been for his wife and daughter, he may never have been persuaded to help the struggling church continue.

During its lifespan, the Barbours Methodist Church of the Wallis Run Charge had twenty pastors, only two of whom were fully ordained elders. These were the Reverends Walter P. Glenn (1971-74) and Paul G. Henry (1978-81). It was during the terms of these ordained pastors that the church faced the tribulations that may have caused its demise.

Seven student pastors served the charge. These came from the institution known as Williamsport Dickinson Junior College until 1947, when it expanded its curriculum to four years, and as Lycoming College since that date. They were the Reverends Ardell G. Gould, Burt E. Sweet, J. Belmont Metzger, Brian A. Fetterman, Edward C. Gould, Jerry L. Richards, and Kermit O. Shrawder. The Reverends Metzger, Richards and Shrawder all had four year terms on the Wallis Run Charge, indicating that they began their student pastorates during their freshmen years and served until their college graduations.

The remaining eleven ministers were supply pastors approved by Methodism's Central Pennsylvania Conference. These were the Reverends Wallace J. Cummings, Charles H. Ramp, Robert L. Hayden, Robert E. Breth, J.F. Beuhler, James Kepler, Daniel S. Robinson, Joseph S. Ziegler, John Greenland, Edward S. Hoyt, and Larry S. Clark. The statistical table on the next page gives a complete list of annual pastoral assignments to the Barbours Church and the status of each minister.

The longest pastorate of the Barbours Church was the five years served by Reverend Larry S. Clark (1966-71). Eight pastors served the charge for a single year or less: Reverends Charles H. Ramp, Robert L. Hayden, Ardell G. Gould, Burt E. Sweet, Daniel S. Robinson, Joseph S. Ziegler, Edward C. Gould, and Edward S. Hoyt. Serving for less than a year were Reverends Sweet, Robinson and Ziegler. Student pastor Burt E. Sweet left the charge in February of 1949, following the death of his father, to become pastor of his late father's charge in the Wyoming Conference. Supply pastor Daniel S. Robinson completed Reverend Sweet's term until pastors were reassigned at the annual conference of May 1949. Joseph S. Ziegler came to the charge in September of 1955, when student pastor Brian S. Fetterman left at the end of the summer that completed his four years at Lycoming College, and served until pastors were reassigned at the annual conference of May 1956.

Statistical Table

On the following page is a chronological list of pastors, number of full members reported, and amount paid toward pastor's salary for the Barbours (Methodist Episcopal, Methodist, United Methodist) Church 1937-81.^a

Year	Pastor	Status ^b	Members ^c	pastor salary		charge ranking	
				claim	paid	size	contribution
1937	Wallace J. Cummings	sup	46>	\$120	\$120	1	4
1938	Charles H. Ramp	sup	40>	120	120	1	5
1939	Robert L. Hayden	sup	42>	120	120	1	5
1940	Robert E. Breth	sup	40>	120	120	1(tie)	5
1941	Robert E. Breth	sup	52>	120	120	1	5
1942	J.F. Beuhler	sup	52>	156	156	1	2
1943	J.F. Beuhler	sup	52>	164	164	1	2
1944	J.F. Beuhler	sup	53	175	175	2	3
1945	Ardell G. Gould	st	53	175	175	2	3
1946	James Kepler	sup	56>	175	175	1	3
1947	James Kepler	sup	49	203	203	2(tie)	3
1948	Burt E. Sweet	st					
	Daniel S. Robinson	sup	49	203	203	2(tie)	3
1949	J. Belmont Metzger	st	55	203	203	2	3
1950	J. Belmont Metzger	st	55	280	280	2	1(tie)
1951	J. Belmont Metzger	st	53	300	300	2	3(tie)
1952	J. Belmont Metzger	st	52	340	340	2(tie)	2
1953	Brian A. Fetterman	st	50	320	320	3	all equal
1954	Brian A. Fetterman	st	49	320	320	3	all equal
1955	Brian A. Fetterman	st	49	320	320	3	all equal
1956	Joseph S. Ziegler	sup		[no report submitted]			
1957	Edward C. Gould	st	54	644	644	2	1(tie)
1958	John Greenland	sup	72	625	625	2	2
1959	John Greenland	sup	57	860	860	2	1(tie)
1960	John Greenland	sup	63	900	900	2	1(tie)
1961	Jerry L. Richards	st	61	932	931	2	1
1962	Jerry L. Richards	st	61	957	957	2	1
1963	Jerry L. Richards	st	60>	957	957	1	1
1964	Jerry L. Richards	st	58>	957	957	1	1
1965	Edward S. Hoyt	sup	58>	621	621	1	1(tie)
1966	Larry S. Clark	sup	58	1016	1016	2(tie)	2
1967	Larry S. Clark	sup	51	1102	1102	2	1
1968	Larry S. Clark	sup	45	1000	1000	3	1(tie)
1969	Larry S. Clark	sup	39	1025	1025	3	1(tie)
1970	Larry S. Clark	sup	39	810	810	3	3
1971	Walter P. Glenn	o	38	810	810	3(tie)	3
1972	Walter P. Glenn	o	36	810	810	4	3
1973	Walter P. Glenn	o	34	810	810	4	3
1974	Kermit O. Shrawder	st	33	561	561	4	5
1975	Kermit O. Shrawder	st	33	791	791	4	5
1976	Kermit O. Shrawder	st	33	none set	1054	4	5
1977	Kermit O. Shrawder	st	29	527	527	4	5
1978	Paul G. Henry	o	29	none	none	4	-
1979	Paul G. Henry	o	23<	none	none	4(tie)	-
1980	Paul G. Henry	o	n/a	[not listed]			
1981	not listed						

a. compiled from the Official Journal of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Episcopal, Methodist, and United Methodist Churches 1937-1981.

b. sup = supply pastor, st = student pastor, o = ordained elder

c. > = largest membership on the charge, < = smallest membership on the charge

The Barbours Church consistently met the financial expectations placed on it by the Central Pennsylvania Conference and the Wallis Run Charge. Every year a sum was set for each church on the charge as its share of the pastor's salary. These sums did not always correlate with the size of the congregation. In 1938, for example, the Barbours Church had the charge's largest membership but its smallest apportionment. From 1937 until the official closing of the church in 1978, the Barbours Church met its financial obligations. A complete list of the congregation's annual apportionments and payments, as well as its ranking within the charge in these areas, appears in the statistical table on the previous page.

Known through the years as the Methodist Episcopal Church (prior to 1939), the Methodist Church (1939-1968), and the United Methodist Church (since 1968), the parent denomination of the Barbours Church is one of the few major Protestant denominations to allow laypersons to perform the duties of pastors. Many religions require pastors to achieve full ordination prior to offering the sacraments, taking the pulpit, or even leading the congregation in prayer. Methodists, on the other hand, advocate allowing a member of the church who feels a call to the ministry to work his or her way into ordination.

An example of this flexibility within the Methodist Church is the writer's grandfather, Reverend Wayne T. Gregory. Mr. Gregory became an official member of the Barbours Methodist Church in 1959 upon his profession of faith.¹⁶ Under the guidance of Reverend John B. Greenland, he became interested in the possibility of one day leading a church. Reverend Greenland encouraged Mr. Gregory on this path by allowing him to assist in the services at Barbours Church, eventually turning the pulpit over to him on occasional Sunday mornings.

After making the prescribed preparation, he was designated an approved supply pastor of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Church and assigned to the Sinnemahoning charge. Reverend Gregory went on to several other pastorates before becoming ordained and enjoying a ministerial career in eastern Pennsylvania. He passed away in January of 1996 and was returned to the place he always considered home to be buried beside his wife and with his son, father, and mother in the Barbours Cemetery.

The Barbours Church was always a relatively active part of the Wallis Run Charge. It was the largest church on the charge 1937-43, 1946, and 1963-65. As other churches continued to grow and disasters beset Barbours, however, it remained about the same size and by 1979 was the smallest of the charge's churches. A complete listing of the annual membership figures appears with the ministerial roster in the statistical table on the previous page.

The Barbours Church held many dinners and ice cream festivals to raise money for its initial renovations of the schoolhouse. Over the years they continued to be held on the church lawn using tables from the homes of the members and became an important part of the church's connection with the community. These activities provided both fellowship and economic benefit.

The congregation also sponsored local Girl and Boy Scouts of America groups for the community.¹⁷ Charge hymnsings and Sunday School picnics were often held at Barbours.^{18,19} During the holiday season the church held Christmas pageants at which the children of the congregation would give recitations of scripture, present the Christmas story, and lead in the singing of carols. A highlight of these pageants for the children was the annual gift exchange, when each child brought a small gift to give to another child in the congregation.²⁰

In 1966 the congregation realized that the building was no longer large enough to house the Sunday School classes. An addition was constructed to accommodate these classes.²¹ The new part of the church was approximately one-third the size of the original structure, making the building approximately 50 by 130 feet. This addition, however, was never completed according to the initial plans set for it. The congregation had intended to divide the area into several rooms, but this was not accomplished and the addition remained as one large room.²²

Another change the Barbours Church went through during the 1960's was a change in its official name. The original Methodist Episcopal Church had broken into many pieces between 1816 and 1860. African Methodist Episcopal congregations formed separate denominations in Philadelphia and New York in 1816 and 1821; Canadian Methodists organized separately in 1828; the Methodist Protestant and Wesleyan Methodist churches broke away in 1839 and 1843; in 1844 the Methodist Episcopal Church South separated from their northern brothers and sisters; and finally in 1860 the Free Methodist Church was organized. The Methodist Protestant Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church South re-united with the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1939 to become the Methodist Church. On April 23, 1968, this church joined with the Evangelical United Brethren Church, a similar denomination with roots among the German-speaking people of colonial America, to form the United Methodist Church.²³ Thus in 1968 Barbours Methodist Church became Barbours United Methodist Church.

The Barbours church, from the occupation of their own building in 1938, moved along a steady course with no drastic changes or dramatic events until the 1970's. During this decade the church met with two natural disasters. In June 1972, the Loyalsock Creek rose above its banks and flooded the village of Barbours. The rapidity of the flood, part of the aftermath of Hurricane Agnes, took the community by surprise. Because the waters rose so suddenly and unexpectedly, residents had no time to prepare and secure the town. The water damaged most of the village. The church, which sits less than fifty yards from the east bank of the Loyalsock Creek, had six feet of water in it.²⁴

It took three years for the congregation to restore the building.²⁵ The congregation had to raise the money for restorations and repairs in excess of the flood relief money they received.^{26,27} They purchased used furnishings in good condition from a church outside Sunbury. An electrician in the congregation donated an electrical heating system. Once the local fire company had hosed the mud and debris out of the building, the refinishing of the hardwood floors and the repair of the other damages to the building were done by four couples within the congregation: Mr. and Mrs. Emory Bryan, Mr. and Mrs. Earl Emick, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fox, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rung.²⁸

The Barbours Church reopened almost three years later on Easter Sunday in March of 1975.²⁹ That year there is an official record of thirty-three full members in the congregation, but the average Sunday School attendance was only ten.³⁰ While the church structure had been restored, the congregation itself did not return to its pre-flood condition.

That only a handful of members returned to the church when it finally reopened can be explained in part by considering the size and location of the village. Because the entire community is along the Loyalsock Creek, when the church was flooded so was the rest of the village as well. The families in Barbours had to cope with both their homes and their church being flooded. The homes had to be repaired first, and the families had to recuperate emotionally from their losses. After working long days at their jobs and in their homes, few in the congregation could withstand the pressures of restoring the church.

Within a few short months after reopening, the church was flooded again in September of 1975. This time, however, the flood did not catch the village by surprise. All of the furnishings that could be removed from the church were hauled in Mr. Joseph Blair's truck to the other former schoolhouse in Barbours. The action saved the furnishings but not the church. In 1975 the water was eight feet deep in the church.³¹ This quick succession of two disasters proved to be too much for the congregation.

The pastor of each United Methodist church or charge in the Central Pennsylvania Conference submits an annual report on the condition of his parish for publication in the conference journals. Since the journals are published only once a year, the information they contain actually pertains to the prior year. In 1981 the Barbours church was omitted from the journal, showing that there was no activity in the church in 1980.

The November 6, 1978, Quarterly Conference of the Wallis Run Charge decided to officially close the Barbours Church. This was done by a motion of Mrs. Robert Rung seconded by Mrs. Charles Fox, both of whom had been active members of the church for many years. The motion carried, turning the church and its real estate over to the Central Pennsylvania Conference for sale. The contents of the church were to go to existing churches of the Wallis Run Charge as needed. Memberships from the Barbours Church were transferred to other churches within the charge or to other churches of the members' choices.³² The majority of the Barbours congregation remained within the Wallis Run Charge, worshipping in a different building but with a familiar pastor.³³

With the official close of the church, the trustees of the Central Pennsylvania Conference advertised the sale of the building in the Williamsport Sun-Gazette Sunday editions on July 10, 17, 24 and 31, 1980. They made the restriction that the building could only be used for purposes other than religious services. They made this restriction to prevent any other organization from trying to convince former members to leave the United Methodist Church to continue worshipping in that building. In addition, the building could at no time be used for the sale of alcoholic beverages. The furnishings and religious symbols were excluded from the sale.³⁴

The building was sold in 1981 to Mr. Jerome Bassett for \$6,000.³⁵ Mr. Bassett also happened to have purchased Mr. Whipple's home on the adjoining lot, so that the situation returned to its former state when Mr. Whipple owned both properties. The building presently sits vacant and, because no modern plumbing facilities can be installed in the structure or anywhere on the land, will undoubtedly remain unused for the foreseeable future. There can be no pressurized water in the building, nor will the land the building is on perk for a septic system.³⁶ Mr. and Mrs. Bassett indicate that the only reason they purchased the church was to protect it from potential vandalism.³⁷

The sight of this vacant building forces one to deliberate on the reasons for the unfortunate closing. The congregation left and the church closed shortly after the devastating floods of the 1970's, leading one to believe that it was the deluges that caused the closing. Further consideration, however, leads one to reach the conclusion that there must have been some additional causes. After all, the families within the village of Barbours managed to recover from the floods and the damages to their homes. What made the church any different? Both were damaged by the floods; both required extensive reconstruction; both demanded time and energy. Why did the families return to repair their physical homes but not their spiritual one?

Congregational apathy plagued the Wallis Run Charge during much of its history. With few exceptions, there was a distinct lack of involvement and participation in activities other than Sunday morning services.³⁸ Prior to the floods, the Barbours Church membership had been in the thirties. After the 1972 flood, however, only eight people pulled together to restore the church. It is unlikely that only these eight could have

made the time and put forth the effort needed to help the church. It is more likely that these members were the only ones willing to put forth the effort necessary to meet the crisis.

Because the pressure was tremendous on the few prominent and active families in the church to restore the building and the congregation, these people could not bear the burden again. So much time, effort, and money was needed that it became almost impossible to sustain the church in the face of the limited respite between the disasters. And so the Reverend Paul G. Henry took it upon himself to restore the building following the 1975 flood. Much to the chagrin of the few remaining members, the pastor requested that they stay out of the process of recovery and that they allow him to do the work on his own.³⁹ The eight members who had done the work after the first flood followed his wishes and transferred to other churches within the charge. But Reverend Henry never accomplished his goal. Although he could not meet the challenge alone, his request to do it in that manner left him no choice.

It is interesting to examine the membership trends during these crucial years. The Barbour's Church membership had decreased from thirty-nine to thirty-four from 1971 to 1973 under the leadership of ordained minister Walter P. Glenn. Student pastor Kermit O. Shrawder held the church membership at thirty-three for the first three of his four years on the charge. Under ordained pastor Paul G. Henry, who began there in 1978, the membership fell from twenty-nine to twenty-three during his first year and closed the following year.

Though there is no further evidence other than the membership records themselves, there may be a correlation between decreases in membership and the education level of the pastors. Those pastors who were students or other non-ordained men were involved in activities outside of the church that demanded much of their time. While their minister was busy with other commitments, the congregations relied on lay leadership during times of trouble -- calling on the minister only during times of crisis. This involvement in the church made it a very personal experience for most of the members. It was truly the congregation's church.

On the other hand, ordained ministers worked solely with and for their congregations. With this type of leadership, laypersons within the church were called upon far less for their assistance. When their roles decreased, the members began to feel that the church was the pastor's and not theirs. Reverend Henry's exclusion of lay leadership may have taken away the feeling that the church was theirs. When they no longer felt that they were a needed part of the church, there was no reason to remain.

One cannot isolate a single reason for the closing of this church. It is most likely due to a combination of factors. A lack of active involvement in the church following the 1972 flood placed the burden of responsibility on too few shoulders, straining those leaders who remained within the Barbour's Church. After the 1975 flood, the burden was taken up by a pastor whose intentions were good, decisions poor, and goals unreachable.

After forty years of ministry within its community, the Barbour's United Methodist Church closed its doors. Opened as the dream of its members, it had been an active part of its community. It had been the place of marriages and funerals. It was part of the lifecycle of the village. Many of the same members, such as Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fox, who attended the first service held in that old schoolhouse were still there forty years later. Mr. and Mrs. Fox were the first couple married in the church; Mr. and Mrs. Fox worked vigorously to restore the building after the 1972 flood; Mrs. Fox seconded the 1978 motion to close the building. It was the work of a few that kept the church alive, but in 1975, at the request of their pastor, these responsible few had no choice but to stand back and watch their dream come to a close.

Endnotes

1. Mrs. Charles Fox, interview.
2. *ibid.*
3. Rev. Wallace J. Cummings, "Report to Fourth Quarterly Conference."
4. "During the pastorate" document.
5. Rev. Brian A. Fetterman, "History of the Loyalsock Charge."
6. "During the Pastorate" document.
7. Rev. J. Merrill Williams, "Report of the Williamsport District Superintendent."
8. *ibid.*
9. Mrs Charles Fox, interview.
10. "During the Pastorate" document.
11. Mrs. Charles Fox, interview.
12. *ibid.*
13. *ibid.*
14. *ibid.*
15. Rev. Robert E. Breth, "Pastor's Report to the Fourth Quarterly Conference."
16. Rev. John B. Greenland, "Report of the Pastor."
17. Rev. John B. Greenland, "Report of the State of the Charge."
18. Rev. Kermit O. Shrawder, "Pastor's Report to the Charge Conference."
19. Rev. Brian A. Fetterman, "Report of the Pastor."
20. Mrs. Charles Fox, interview.
21. Rev. Edward S. Hoyt, "Report to the District Superintendent."
22. Mrs Charles Fox, interview.
23. Edwin H. Maynard, "Methodists."
24. Mrs. Charles Fox, interview.
25. Rev. Kermit O. Shrawder, "Pastor's Report to the Charge Conference."
26. Mrs. Charles Fox, interview.
27. Rev. Grantas E. Hoopert, "To Rev. Walter Glenn."
28. Mrs. Charles Fox, interview
29. Rev. Kermit O. Shrawder, "Pastor's Report to the Charge Conference."
30. Rev. Kermit O. Shrawder, "Report to the District Superintendent."
31. Mrs. Charles Fox, interview.
32. "Minutes of the Quarterly Conference of the Wallis Run Charge."
33. Mrs. Charles Fox, interview.
34. Williamsport Sun-Gazette.
35. Rev. Walter M. Schell, letter.
36. E. Eugene Yaw, letter.
37. Mrs. Jerome A. Bassett, interview.
38. Rev. Robert E. Breth, "Pastor's Report to the Fourth Quarterly Conference."
39. Mrs. Charles Fox, interview.

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