

Great-Grandfather James Reiley

by Henry Baker Reiley, 1950

editors introduction: James Reiley is the founder of the longest continuous line of ordained Methodist pastors within the bounds of the Central Pennsylvania Conference. That direct line includes

James Reiley (1784-1841), father of
J. McKendree Reiley (1817-1897), father of
William McKendree Reiley (1847-1907), father of
James McKendree Reiley (1876-1952), father of
William Witman Reiley (1915-1979).

The publisher of the booklet from which the following accounts have been taken, Henry Baker Reiley, is the son of William McKendree Reiley. He was born 2/18/1875 in Shirleysburg, Huntingdon County, where his father was serving at the time. He graduated from Baltimore City College in 1896 and married Naomi Kessler of Altoona in 1900. He was editor of the *True American* published at Trenton NJ until 1908, when he became editor and general manager of the *Daily and Weekly Herald* in Waynesboro PA. He founded the *Brownsville Telegraph* in 1914 and the *Somerset American* in 1929. When he compiled the writings of his great-grandfather in 1950, Henry Reiley was 75 years old and still working at least 60 hours a week at the *American*.

Although Henry's entrance into the newspaper business meant that the unbroken line of Reiley clergy would have to continue through his brother James McKendree Reiley, his own son Henry Baker Reiley Jr. (1908-1984) was admitted to the Central Pennsylvania Conference in 1938 – and served Rouzer-ville, Fayetteville, White Haven, Hastings, Everett and Gettysburg before transferring to the Ohio Conference in 1951.

That great-grandfather James Reiley was a devout Methodist cannot be denied. He named at least two of his sons for prominent bishops that he knew personally – and both of those sons went on to become ordained Methodist pastors themselves:

*James McKendree Reiley (1817-1897), named for bishop William McKendree (1757-1835).

*Asbury Roberts Reiley (1829-1908), named for bishops Francis Asbury (1745-1816) and Robert Roberts (1748-1843).

The following chapters are taken from a booklet published in 1950 by Henry Baker Reiley from the original journal manuscript of James Reiley. Apparently the handwriting of James Reiley was not always clear, and the familiarity of Henry Reiley with nineteenth century central Pennsylvania people and places was less than perfect. Spelling errors in names and places have been

corrected, and footnotes have been added. Otherwise, the words and phraseology are those of James Reiley as published by his great-grandson Henry Baker Reiley.

Only the chapters relevant to areas within the present Central Pennsylvania Conference are herein presented. The entire booklet is kept in the biography section of the conference archives.

Great-grandfather James Reiley was born and raised in Somerset PA. He was admitted on trial in 1807 and assigned to the West Wheeling Circuit in the Monongahela District of the Baltimore Conference. At that time there were only seven conferences, and the Baltimore conference covered all the area now served by the following conferences: Virginia, Baltimore-Washington, West Virginia, Ohio East, Western Pennsylvania, Central Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania portion of the Wyoming Conference. In the first seven chapters of the journal he served the following appointments, all in the Baltimore Conference.¹

1807 – West Wheeling circuit, Monongahela District

1808 – Wyoming circuit, Susquehanna District

1809 – Greenfield circuit, Monongahela District

1810 – Monroe circuit, Greenbrier District

1811 – Prince George’s circuit, Baltimore District

1812 – Mahoning circuit, Monongahela District

1813 – Ohio circuit, Monongahela District

Chapter VIII [March 1813 – March 1814]

My appointment to, and labours on, the Ohio Circuit

[editor’s note: We include one camp meeting story from this year because the presiding elder (district superintendent) involved was Central Pennsylvania’s own Jacob Gruber – and it relates one of the few times when Jacob Gruber did not come out of a situation looking well. In addition, the story illustrates some of the typical problems faced at early camp meetings.

And the final paragraph of this chapter tells of James Reiley’s marriage to Ellenor Ewing of Gatchellville, York County. Gatchellville was part of the Harford Circuit. James Reiley passed through the area each year going to Conference in Baltimore. One year his brother Tobias Reiley was the assigned preacher on the Harford Circuit, and James spent several days there. Tobias had

¹ Technically, his service in 1808 was in the Philadelphia Conference. That year the Susquehanna District was transferred to the Philadelphia Conference. The following year most of the preachers who had been assigned there, including James Reiley, returned to the Baltimore Conference – but the Susquehanna District stayed in the Philadelphia Conference until the formation of the Genesee Conference in 1810. When the Genesee Conference split in 1829, the area became part of the Oneida Conference. When the Oneida Conference split in 1852, it became part of the Wyoming Conference – where it has remained ever since.

married Ellenor's sister Esther Ewing, and so James became friendly with the family and visited there whenever he passed through on his way to Conference.]

We agreed to hold a camp meeting. At the quarterly meeting at which this was determined on, it was also determined not to admit of the establishment of any tent, or any other place whatever, to sell spirits, cider, beer, cakes, horse feed, or any other articles whatever, with a view of speculation, or making money. This determination was published coincident with the publishing of the camp meeting. But notwithstanding this precaution, a little Dutch² baker from Washington was there the first day of the meeting and succeeded in getting a tent erected in the first row. And about the setting of the sun, he opened shop.

Getting information of this, I went to him immediately and informed him of our purpose, and also notified him to leave the ground. He pleaded it was then late, that he could not leave that night, but would leave in the morning. I told him on the condition that he would lock up and not sell any more, he might remain till morning. This he promised to do. But about nine that night, I learned they were selling again. I immediately went to him.

Said I, "Did you not promise me you would lock up and not sell?"

He replied, "I have not sold anything since."

"But there has been selling of this," said I, producing the items. "There is the proof. Who did it?"

"That little boy," was the answer.

"Did you not authorize him to sell? Are these your cakes?"

"They are," was the reply.

I questioned, "Whose boy is this?"

"Mine."

"But you did not authorize him to sell?"

"No, I did not."

My reply – "Do you suppose I have so little sense as to be blinded by such stuff? You can't get away too soon."

The next morning the baker met with Jacob Gruber,³ the presiding elder, and related his tale of woe to him. He applied his suit by a few snuffles and tears. The result was that the presiding elder called a meeting of the official members of Ohio circuit and pleaded the cause of the Dutch baker, introducing it with the following quotation, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." (O wretched application.)

"He was a poor man. It would break him to lose all his cakes and cider."

I reminded them of the determination of the quarterly conference, together with its announcement around the circuit.

² Dutch, in this context, means German.

³ Jacob Gruber was one of a handful Methodist preachers who was fluent in German. One year he travelled with Bishop Asbury and would give the sermon whenever they found themselves in a German community. It could be this ethnic connection that influenced Gruber to be sympathetic with the baker.

“But he says he will sell nothing but cakes and cider.”

“And do you place any confidence in what that man says? I do not. He has already lied to me.” I told them with my consent no privilege would be granted him.

They did, however, give him privilege to set up about a half-quarter of a mile down, and there sell his cakes and cider. Mark the result. About three in the afternoon, information was given me that there was a drunken rabble at the establishment. About nine o'clock that night we were told they were not only drunk, but also fighting.

That same presiding elder, Jacob Gruber, had the assurance to direct me to get a parcel of men and go break up that wretched establishment. And O, instead of saying, “Brother Gruber, you must now manage the matter the best you can,” feeling a deep interest in the meeting, I obeyed.

We collected about a dozen stout, firm men, with the owner of the ground (Richard Wells), and headed out. By some means they had got wind of our intentions and had conveyed several vessels into the woods. Notwithstanding, we got one full barrel of spirits, and two more about one-third to one-half full.

A scene now ensued that was at once amusing and alarming. The scamps followed us into the woods as we searched for the hidden vessels. The night being dark, they annoyed us very much by blowing out our candles. After two or three disasters of this kind, a large and powerful man (George McCollough) said, “If any man will bear me out, I will put an end to this work.”

Said the owner of the land, “I will bear you out.”

He groped about a little, and getting hold of a stone he knocked out the head of the barrels. It might have been said that the devil was mad, and his children raged. I was never more afraid of a general interruption at a camp meeting than I was that night.

...

Being pleased and much edified from my first acquaintance with the Ewing family, the old man⁴ being a man of much reading, possessing a large fund of general information, well acquainted with the subject of theology, I always found in his society and that of his family much comfort and profit, especially as my brother was connected with the family. I had continued my visits there, when I could conveniently do it. On my way to conference, I took that in my way. After conversing the matter over, and finding there was a reciprocity of feeling and affection between us on the subject, Miss Ellenor and myself agreed to

⁴ Alexander Ewing (1751-1832) was one of the earliest and most prominent Methodists in southern York County. He was a local preacher, and the itinerant rolls would include his son and two sons-in-law, six grandsons, and many other descendants. The *Christian Advocate* for April 16, 1832, published the following tribute: “One of the first five in his neighborhood who embraced the religion of Jesus among the Methodists. In the midst of persecution he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church, became a class leader, and some time a local preacher. For about 40 years he kept on the way. Possessed of a strong mind and improved by the study of God’s word, he preached the word with power and was eminently useful in calling sinners to repentance.”

identify our fortunes and fates, our joys and sorrows together, till death us should part, and thus to become one. Matters were arranged with the parents, and everything concerning it was pleasant and agreeable. Matters thus adjusted, I went on to conference.

During conference, by note, I apprised Mr. Asbury that I had made such arrangements within the bounds of Harford circuit, not giving the name of the lady with whom it was made, and stated, "If my appointment could be made contiguous to that circuit, it would be gratefully acknowledged by one who wishes ever to act as a son in the gospel." The bishop, however, saw fit to send me about 120 miles from my intended father-in-law. This possibly might not have been the case, had I given him the name of my intended, as he was very intimate in the Ewing family.

Chapter IX [March 1814 – March 1815]

My appointment to, labours, and exercises of mind on Huntingdon Circuit –
with Samuel Davis⁵ (a young man of zeal and talent)
for my colleague (his first year).

My appointment being at so great a distance caused us to hasten the time of consummating our matrimonial engagements, as we had intended deferring it for some months. The Tuesday succeeding the rising of conference, the rites of marriage were solemnized between us by my brother Tobias, and the ensuing Monday I set out for my circuit.

Starting at Huntingdon, the circuit was then through Williamsburg, up the Juniata River to a little village named (I think) Dennisontown, thence through Sinking Valley, thence across to Phillipsburg, thence above Clearfield on the opposite side of the river several miles, and thence through the mountains by a powder mill to Warrior's Mark, thence to Half Moon, to P. Gray's, thence to Benton's east of Pennsylvania Yellowbank Furnace, thence down Spruce Creek, taking in a number of appointments, thence over to Kishacoquillas, thence across to Stone Valley, taking in some five appointments, back to Huntingdon, embracing in all 28 or 30 appointments, and an extent of country little short of 300 miles.

Here I met with new and unexpected difficulty. I made an effort to procure a boarding place⁶ in a religious and Methodist family for Mrs. Reiley to board, but in this I failed. I finally made arrangements to board her with my

⁵Although "a young man of zeal and talent," Samuel Davis succumbed to the physical demands of early circuit riding and died in 1822, at the age of 28, after just 8 years in the ministry. This was typical for Methodist circuit riders in the early 1800's. His complete obituary from the 1823 *General Minutes* is given in Appendix A.

⁶As circuit riders needed no permanent home, there were no parsonages at this time. The introduction of married men into the itinerancy began to change things, however, and the action taken by the Huntingdon circuit in this regard is given in Appendix B.

brother, who was appointed that year to the Aughwick circuit and located his family at Concord – which was, by the way, 32 miles from Huntingdon and with two exceedingly severe mountains and the Juniata river to cross. After an absence of four weeks, and having made this arrangement, I returned to convey her, who now to me was the dearest among mortals, to her new home – she who for my sake had consented to leave parents and friends.

After parting with them, she saw them no more for about eighteen months. This privation she bore with a patience and fortitude not often equaled, and very rarely surpassed by any. This was done merely because it would have interfered with the requirements of the church to have done otherwise.

I found Huntingdon circuit, in many of the larger classes, more cut up in contentious and party [i.e., separatist] groups than any circuit I had ever gone to. This was occasioned by my predecessors in charge having suffered the different parties, in case of trials, to choose the committee or select number instead of doing it himself. So true is it in Methodism, being a system of necessity and providence, that we succeed best when we keep rules and don't attempt to mend them.

Mrs. Reiley boarding at so great a distance subjected me to much additional riding. Here I would gratefully record the kindness of Brother and Sister Morrison of Huntingdon, and of their daughter (Mrs. Pinnell, the widow of Rev. Jesse Pinnell⁷). I had so arranged the labour of the circuit as to have from the Sabbath at Huntingdon till next at Williamsburg to go home, be with Mrs. Reilly, and return. I uniformly spent the night previous to my setting out for home at Brother Morrison's, and through their kind attentions I have frequently, when the days were short, set out so as to ride the twelve miles by the dawn of day.

The first part of the year we had hard toiling, exceedingly heavy dragging at Huntingdon. But toward the close there appeared to be almost a simultaneous bursting forth of a gracious work around the circuit. Perhaps I never left a circuit with fairer prospects for a powerful and extensive revival than I left at Huntingdon. But this was fully realized the two succeeding years.

During this year I was harassed with severe conflicts of mind and awful temptations. So awfully severe were they, many times even when I was dispensing the word of life to fallen men, that I burst out in a profuse sweat all over me. What a feeble worm is man unless shielded by power divine. Amid those conflicts my soul exclaimed, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him." I hold fast my integrity and will not let it go. My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

*I hold thee with a trembling hand
And will not let thee go,*

⁷ Jesse Pinnell (1783-1812) was born in Culpepper County VA and admitted to the itinerancy in 1805. Like so many of the early itinerants, he succumbed to the hardships of circuit riding and his health failed. He died at the age of 29, his last appointment being on the Bedford circuit 1810-11.

*Till steadfastly by faith I stand
And all thy goodness know.*

During this year I attended a camp meeting at what was called the Three Springs, within the bounds of my brother's work. Here I formed my first acquaintance with the Rev. James McCann,⁸ an acquaintance I have greatly prized ever since. At this meeting I had preached twice, previous to the last night. My brother Tobias had been called upon by the presiding elder to preach that night. He applied to me to take his place. After much persuasion and hesitation, I consented. I took for my text "Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but this we do know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see Him as He is." Perhaps I never felt more perfect liberty than I did that night. It was a time never, no never, to be forgotten. It was a season of God's power.

There were a number on Huntingdon circuit, the recollection of whom has ever been pleasant. A few I will mention. I have already named Brother Morrison and family. There are also Brother Vantries and family, Brother and Sister Ake, the Westons, Brother Gray and family, Benton and wife and wife's sisters, Sister Batman and family, Crum and family, Father and Mother Green and children, the Oak family, old Brother and Sister Hunter. And I must not omit Mary Ann Wilson, a child in the gospel. My labours drawing toward a close for the conference year, a little more than a month previous to the session of conference, I took Mrs. Reiley for the first time to my father's. Here I left her with my parents. After spending a short time in the neighborhood, I returned and took my last round of Huntingdon circuit.

Chapter XI [March 1816 – March 1817]

My appointment to and labours on Bedford Circuit.

At this conference I was appointed to Bedford circuit, the appointments of which, notwithstanding a few exceptions, were in valleys. The appointments lying in the midst of these valleys reduced the preacher to the necessity to cross many mountains. The circuit extended from Bedford, by Bloody Run, down the Juniata, thence over to Brush Creek, thence to Wells Valley, thence to Broadtop mountain, and down to Stonerstown. Then to Woodcock Valley, thence through by Hollidaysburg to the neighborhood of Martinsburg, thence to Dennon's Creek, embracing two appointments, thence through Schellsburg, a few miles toward the Allegheny mountain, containing from 15 to 18 appointments to be performed in two weeks.

⁸ James McCann was one of the itinerants appointed to the Carlisle circuit in 1814. Gordon Pratt Baker's 1972 *History of the Baltimore Conference*, page 115, relates that McCann's desire "to prosecute his medical studies" came to the conference floor in 1818 and "gave rise to considerable debate." A motion to request him "to abandon the study of medicine was lost." He was still serving appointments in the conference several years later, but nothing more is known about him.

We fixed our place of residence on Broadtop mountain (quite an elevated, though not a splendid situation), at the house of old brother Barnitts (Germans), a good industrious and kind family. Not having much room, we were much cramped, but this was relieved much by the friendliness and kindness of the family.

At a few places there were important classes: Broadtop, Wells Valley, others on Brush Creek, Bloody Run (but at that time rather lifeless), Bedford, Dennon's Creek. Above Schellsburg at I. Sampson's, there was a small class of which James Sampson (then a singing master) was a member. Here the first time the subject was named, I had a conversation with him on the subject of the ministry.

This year we had a camp meeting at Wells Valley. Having received a very severe kick from a colt a little previous, at its commencement I was quite unprepared for the labours devolving upon me. And as though to complete the trouble, the presiding elder seemed to come there in a pet. He did not say more than five words to me from the commencement till the Sabbath morning, and then, to my surprise (but not to my affliction), he met me with all the pleasantries and sweetness of a beautiful May morn. Making some little apology for his reservedness towards me, he requested me to preach the morning sermon. I declined, saying there were stronger there. And since it was my own meeting, it might seem strange for me to preach. But all in vain, as he would receive no excuse. From that time till he left, he was soft and sweet and pleasant in his deportment – and also at the Huntingdon Camp meeting, to which he gave me a most pressing and cordial invitation. O what is man, when controlled by his lordly, poor little, petty self! At our camp meeting we derived great advantage from a linen tent from Concord. Our meeting wound up sweetly and resulted profitably.

At the camp meeting at Huntingdon, I was truly glad to see, and felt happy to find myself once more surrounded by, my Huntingdon friends. Perhaps the best and most successful efforts of my life were made at that meeting – from

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

This meeting was owned to the conversion of many souls.

During this season I attended a camp meeting on Allegheny circuit, the field of labour of my brother Tobias and R. Cadden. This was my first acquaintance on that circuit. This was truly a good meeting. While I was preaching on the Sabbath, the power of the Lord was revealed in such a manner as not only to cause a general burst of feeling among the congregation, but also to produce a great effort among the preachers – one of whom fell prostrate on the floor. At this meeting I formed my first acquaintance with John J. Jacobs and Thomas Lakin,⁹ two very distinguished local preachers – especially Lakin, who

⁹ Frederick E. Maser's 1971 *Methodism in Central Pennsylvania*, page 74, reports that "Thomas Lakin, the first local preacher in Bedford County, who had settled in Bean's Cove about 1783,

was the most able minister I ever listened to as a local preacher who had never traveled.

But I return to the story of Bedford circuit. At Wells Valley, an anonymous letter was found (written, as it was afterward found out, by a young man who had been unsuccessfully addressing her) in which a daughter of a class leader was deeply implicated in her character. He, taking up an idea that that the letter had been written by a young lady, a member of the class with whom his daughter had corresponded, arraigned her under this suspicion on a charge of slander. In this case it occurred to me that a secretary to take down the minutes of the trial would be important. I fortunately selected his son-in-law for that purpose. This circumstance, under God, was the means of saving both the leader and the class. From that time to the present, I have been in the practice of appointing secretaries in cases of critical trials.

On this circuit there were some very devoted persons to God and His cause. Foremost in this group we would place a local preacher and his wife named Horn,¹⁰ a German – this man learned to read English in almost a miraculous way, as a direct answer to prayer, and he regularly worshiped God in his family three times a day. And there is Brother Libarger, whose afflictions and trials in his family at that time were extreme. And Sister Fishburn, Brother E. Aker and wife, Brother and Sister Willet, Father and Mother Barnett, and Brother Ashcom.

Owing to peculiar family circumstances, I did not attend conference this spring. On the eighth of March, 1817, James McKendree was born (at Broadtop City, Bedford County). I have never forgotten the impression made on my mind (amounting to strong conviction) at the time of his birth, an impression which has encouraged my heart many times since on his behalf.

attended during his official church life every quarterly meeting and camp meeting held on his circuit (Allegheny) until he moved to Ohio in 1826.”

¹⁰ Heinrich “Henry” Horn (1758-1845) came from Germany as a teenager in the 1770’s, distinguished himself in the Revolutionary War, married, and settled near Leesburg VA. Under the influence of Francis Asbury, he became an ordained local preacher. In 1795 he sold his farm in Loudoun County VA and moved to West St. Clair township, Bedford County PA. He founded the Horn Methodist Church – of which a building still stands, although the property is no longer United Methodist. The conference archives has a file on the Horn family and the Horn church. [The story of the Horn Church is interesting. It was part of the Central Pennsylvania Conference at the time of the 1968 Union that formed that United Methodist Church and necessitated the adjustment of conference boundaries – but it was no longer an active congregation. The new boundaries placed the building barely within the Western Pennsylvania Conference – but the church “fell through the cracks” and neither Conference expressed interest in dealing with property (or, since the charge was being divided between the two conferences, perhaps each conference thought that the other was handling this particular unused structure). The building and a small congregation emerged as the Horn Methodist Church – not a United Methodist congregation, and not affiliated with either the Central Pennsylvania or the Western Pennsylvania Conference.]

Chapter XIV [March 1819 March 1820]

My first appointment to, and labours on, Carlisle circuit

[editors note: The 1950 published booklet from which this is taken has the following note at this point: “Here four pages of the original manuscript are missing.” It would be very interesting to see what those missing pages had to say, because according to the 1819 General Minutes James Reiley was assigned to Harford circuit and Eli Hinkle was assigned to Carlisle circuit. Apparently a switch was made soon after Conference, for Reiley spent most of the year in Carlisle and Hinkle spent most of the year in Harford. The last entry before the missing pages, in James Reiley’s Chapter XIII [March 1818 – March 1819], includes the following partial paragraph.

“During this year, Eli Hinkle had traveled Harford circuit, within the bounds of which my father-in-law lived. Toward the close of the year, at several appointments, there was quite an excitement and a goodly number joined on trial. The result was that a petition had been sent on for his return to the circuit. This petition was supported by the leading members of those neighborhoods. There was a large portion of the circuit, however, who (to say the least) had no participation in it whatever...”

The missing pages supposedly would shed light on the process used in 1819 to justify and make post-conference changes in appointments. Unfortunately, the published booklet picks up the record in the midst of the last incidents for 1819-1820. Only the final summary for the year can stand alone, and *The Chronicle* continues at that point.]

On the 14th day of August of this year, our first daughter was born.

During this year we formed several new classes, one at Pine Grove Furnace and one at New Cumberland.

At Gettysburg, where the class at that time was small and feeble, I held a meeting. Although there were not many converts, yet it was greatly blest to that place. It was held in the court house, commencing on a Friday night. At it, as to ministerial assistance, I was entirely alone. But the God of Gideon was with us.

While we could not boast of an extensive or powerful revival that year, yet at a number of appointments we had a pleasant state of things and considerable accessions to the church. At Rock Chapel, where the society had been greatly agitated the year before, harmony and peace were restored and some accessions made.

There were accessions at Lewisberry, Yocums, D. Pikes’, Dunlap, Carlisle, Shippensburg, Weakley, sister Mayberry’s, Eges Forge, New Cumberland, and Pine Grove Furnace – and also to some extent at a few other places. At the close of the year peace and goodwill prevailed generally, and a pleasant state of religious feeling predominated.

Chapter XV [March 1820 – March 1821]

My reappointment to, scenes of affliction or severe trials the first of the year,
and final results of my labours on Carlisle circuit the second year

At the close of the ensuing conference, there was announced for Carlisle circuit J.G.¹¹ and James Reiley. I was in possession of the plan of the circuit. In delivering it up to him, as he was to be the preacher-in-charge, I was met with from him in such a forbidding manner and a repulsiveness of countenance such as I had never witnessed (and trust may never again) exhibited from one colleague towards another. He approached me more in the attitude of an antagonist than a fellow laborer in the vineyard of the Lord.

This, however, was only a fair index of his spirit and conduct toward me while he remained on the circuit. In passing around the circuit (he accomplished about one round before his removal), had he been as diligent to get souls converted as he was to disaffect and prejudice the people against me, it would have been much better for himself and the circuit. He was even at the pains (as he told me himself) of waiting on the bishops (at the General Conference then in session in Baltimore) to prevail upon them to remove me from the circuit.

At one time (in my own house) he talked to me in a manner unbecoming a man of common decency, much more a Christian and a Christian minister. I have ever since censured myself that I suffered it, and by the grace and mercy of God, I am determined never to bear such another talk. As though all this were not enough, he met with his successor, Brother William Prettyman,¹² and laboured to disaffect his mind toward me. In this to some extent, at least (and no marvel) for the time being, he succeeded.

After all this, is it any marvel that I should feel to say I hope God in mercy to me will forever keep me from being a colleague of J.G.¹³ again? Here I

¹¹ On the surface it appears that the itinerant named only as J.G. cannot be further identified. The change must have been made very soon after conference, for the printed minutes name William Prettyman as the Carlisle associate of James Reiley. Reiley later states that J.G. took an appointment in the Philadelphia Conference. Since transfers between conferences were not being noted at the time, the identity of J.G. cannot be determined by those records. Going through the entire list of appointments for the Baltimore and Philadelphia Conferences, however, leads to an uncomfortable conclusion: the only person with initials J.G. who was assigned in the Baltimore Conference (to Frederick) in 1819 and in the Philadelphia Conference (to Dauphin) in 1820 is Jacob Gruber. This is unsettling because Jacob Gruber is considered one of our most able and effective early itinerants, a man of national significance and reputation – and the story that develops does not treat J.G. kindly. But considering the reputation of James Reiley, the incident cannot be casually dismissed – and perhaps it relates in part to the camp meeting confrontation mentioned earlier in this article.

¹² William Prettyman (1792-1875) went on to have 53 distinguished years of effective service, including 4 as superintendent of the Northumberland District. Two of his sons and one of his grandsons entered the Methodist ministry.

¹³ Jacob Gruber (1778-1850) was an out-spoken, opinionated, and very conservative preacher – especially in matter of personal holiness. The most plausible explanation for this seemingly outrageous behavior is that that Gruber found the position of James Reiley unacceptable in one of

obtained a knowledge (to some extent at least) of what I had been persuaded of before – that is, that unfriendly agency in the council sometimes operated against me. The presiding elder¹⁴ advised me to prefer charges against him, but not loving strife, and knowing it would throw Carlisle circuit into a foment, I declined.

I shall not stop here to inquire into the propriety or impropriety of appointing a stranger and a junior to the charge of the circuit.¹⁵ J.G. transferred to the Philadelphia Conference, and William Prettyman transferred from the Philadelphia to the Baltimore Conference, and was appointed to the charge of Carlisle circuit. For this change I have ever felt thankful.

After he had gotten on the circuit, I embraced the first possible opportunity of paying my respects to him. In this visit I had two objects in view: First, to give him a cordial welcome, as a fellow laborer in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, to a sister conference and to myself. Secondly, having acquired a little experience by what I had already suffered, to ascertain (if I could prudently) whether his interview with his predecessor had unfavorably impressed his mind toward me.

In the course of our interview, as a matter of course, he being a stranger and I having traveled the circuit the year before, he made a number of inquiries about the circuit. In replying to those inquiries, said I, “Brother, Prettyman, a class may be formed at Mechanicsville¹⁶ to advantage. I would have formed a class there prior to conference, but for such and such reasons. As I will be there first, if it meets with your views, I will drive down the stakes, make the necessary arrangements, and when you come along you can ratify it.” He mildly replied, “Things may remain as they are until I get along myself.”

the areas he championed – plain dress, repudiation of slavery, etc. It is possible that the mid-year change of James Reiley from Harford to Carlisle involved such an issue – and that Gruber considered it serious enough to make it one of his causes. It is even further possible that the four missing pages of the manuscript were deliberately removed because they revealed that the mid-year move was over of an issue with James Reiley and not merely the desirability of returning Eli Hinkle to Harford circuit. Even though some labeled Gruber an eccentric, he was a man of principle who would not stoop to such behavior without what he considered justifiable cause.

¹⁴ The presiding elder was Joseph Frye (1786-1845). Born in Winchester VA and an itinerant from 1809 to 1836, he is described in Armstrong’s 1907 History of the Old Baltimore Conference as “a man of fine common sense and good preaching.”

¹⁵ Now it appears that it is Reily who is being petty. For circuits requiring two elders, it was common to stagger the appointments over two years so that there would always be one person who knew the area – and the elder returning for the second year was typically designated as the senior pastor. But Gruber could hardly be called “a stranger and a junior.” He was older than Reily, had been an itinerant longer than Reiley, and had served as district superintendent more than once – in fact, he had previously served Carlisle circuit 1804-05 (before Reiley was even in the ministry) and as superintendent of the Carlisle District 1815-18. So who was more qualified to be the senior pastor?

¹⁶ This is apparently a reference to Mechanicsburg, where a regular appointment was taken up a few years later in 1826 and a class was organized in 1829. There was at the time an appointment in Upper Allen township at the home of John Dunlap, and annual camp meetings were held on 21 acres of Dunlap land beginning about this time – in 1820.

“Ah,” thought I, “the mischief is done. You have been made to believe that I am an officious man, but you will learn better before the year closes. Go on and do your own work, William.”

It is due to Brother Prettyman, and I record it with much pleasure, that in him I found a religious, faithful, worthy and pleasant friend and colleague. In this respect, I have ever found him the same up to the present. We spent a pleasant and happy year together. It was not long before he began to give me intimations he would be pleased if I would assist him in management of the business of the circuit. Those intimations strengthened till they grew to some degree of solicitude. In the fall he said to Brother Hemphill¹⁷ and myself “that he did not pretend to say what the object of design was, but he was happy to find me a very different character from what I had been represented to by J.G.”

During this year we laboured with various discouragements and successes. The accessions to the church were not as great this year as they were the previous year. As a whole, peace and harmony prevailed, as did a pleasant state of religious feeling.

On this circuit there were a number embalmed on my cordial affections. A few I will name: Brother Thompson, the Frankenbergers, D. Pike and wife, the Yocum families, Sister Dunlap, J. McCaffey and wife. The Staymans, the Davises and many others in Shippensburg, the Funks, the Sadlers, the McGrues, H. Vannarsdal with some of his connections, Sister Newman, the Cornelius family, the Wells family, Brother and Sister Studebaker, Brother and Sister Pharo, Sister Mayberry, Brother and Sister Dixon, Brother T. and Sister Weakley, E. Thompson, Brother Dipple and family, Brother Cooper and wife, Brother Hendle and family, Sister Mary Coughman, Sister Frank and especially her daughter Sally Riley, the McCarter families, R. and Mary Zullinger and many others in Carlisle, the Hopkins family, Brother McGlaughlin at Newville with many, many more that might be named.

Toward the close of the year, the people seemed generally to lament that my time was drawing toward a close. And in some places, especially in Shippensburg, they inquired, as I had not come direct from conference to the circuit, whether it would not be possible for me to continue another year – and if it would, they were very desirous to send in a petition for that purpose.¹⁸ This terminated, through the mercy of God, my labours on the circuit.

¹⁷ Andrew Hemphill was the circuit rider on the adjacent Little York (i.e., York) circuit. He was born in Ireland, admitted to the Baltimore Conference in 1803, and died in 1837.

¹⁸ At that time there was rule limiting an itinerant to two consecutive years at the same appointment. Since James Reiley came to Carlisle in the midst of his first year there, and had only been assigned there once at conference, he was technically eligible to be returned for another year. Over time, the two year limit was raised (first to three, and then higher) and finally eliminated.

Chapter XVI [March 1821 – March 1822]

My appointment to and labours on the Allegany circuit

[editors note: The Allegany circuit is centered in Cumberland MD, outside the bounds of our conference. The first part of this chapter is presented here for two reasons. (1) It includes material on “winding up” affairs in Carlisle. (2) Southern Bedford County churches now within our conference bounds, which are identified by footnotes, were part of this circuit and are included in his introduction to the Allegany circuit.]

The peculiar situation of my dear mother prevented my attending conference at the close of my labours on Carlisle circuit. Having made previous arrangements for that purpose, I superintended the sale of her movables, settled her business, and took her with me with a view to succor and take care of her in her declining days. On our way down to Carlisle, never did I witness more cheerfulness or a greater flow of spirits in my beloved parent. Although naturally modest and retiring, wherever she was she appeared to be happy and at home. We arrived at Carlisle on Monday, and here I learned my appointment stood for Allegany circuit – with John Miller for a colleague.

On Tuesday and Wednesday my dear mother appeared both well and happy. On Thursday, in company with Mrs. Reiley and myself, she paid a social visit at a friend’s house. While sitting at supper she was taken with a severe chill (taken with a severe attack of perrapanuma [sic], as mother was subject to severe attacks of pleurisy), and in the space of fifteen minutes she was unable to walk alone. Mrs. Reiley and myself immediately bore her home (only a small distance) and put her in bed.

Now follows a scene which beggars description. On the Sabbath following, being the first of April, our time was up in the house. We knew that the owner of the house intended moving to it. He was an old man, an old member of the church and a steward. There had been no difficulty between us. On Friday I went to him to ask the privilege of room till it would be determined how it would terminate with my mother – but he refused. I pleaded with him. I urged the reproach it would bring on the church to have to remove an old member, almost in a dying condition, out of the house. This he admitted. I urged the delicacy of carrying my aged parent, in almost a dying condition, along the streets of Carlisle – where I had lived for two years as one of their ministers. This he also admitted. But still – O must I say it! – he refused.

I returned with a pained and sorrowful heart. I looked around a little, and a poor sister already named, to wit Sally Riley, kindly offered me her room – to do which she had to crowd her furniture into a very small apartment. The kindness I witnessed from this poor woman, especially in this time of extremity, and the kindness of her mother Sister Frank, and the kindness of her sister Mary and her husband, who was not at that time a professor of religion, I record with much feeling and gratitude. And I pray that God may reward them a hundredfold.

On Saturday I borrowed a wide settee, on which we made a palat. I laid my beloved mother on that, and a young man named Samuel Hill and myself conveyed her to her last residence on earth. When we got to the house, I took her in my arms and carried her to her bed – where after witnessing the kind attention of many in Carlisle (for they were very attentive) and after enduring extreme suffering on the ensuing Saturday evening, in much peace and triumph my much loved parent left the church below to join the church above (where by-and-by I expect to overtake her).

On the after part of the next day, being Sabbath, after a sermon had been delivered in the church, accompanied by a numerous concourse of people, she was interred in the burial ground at Carlisle. Rest, my Dear Mother, 'till Gabriel's trump shall sound; thy toils are over, thy troubles ended. Rest 'till Christ shall bid thee rise.

I had never witnessed the withering influence of Swartswelder's¹⁹ doctrines as strikingly as on the occasion of my mother's funeral. He had admired her character, both as a woman and as a Christian. I had put into his hands statistics of her Christian experience and life pretty fully – and yet with all these advantages, his words seemed to adhere to his lips. The Rev. Mr. Duffield²⁰, though an entire stranger, exhibited five times the interest in one prayer than he [Swartswelder] did in all his performance. So true, "If the light that is in you becomes darkness, how great is that darkness."

During this scene of affliction, the attentions and kindness of Mrs. Swartswelder, and I record it with much pleasure, were unremitting – and also Brother and Sister Childs with many others, among whom Polly Coughman, Martha Butler and Nancy Moore were prominent. Little did I think when I brought mother to Carlisle, that in less than two weeks I would consign her body to the silent grave.

We spent the remainder of the week in Carlisle and the neighborhood, and on the next Monday we set out for our circuit. The first day we reached Chambersburg. The next day being stormy, we remained there. Wednesday morning we set out and reached as far as Hagerstown. Here we intended only to dine, but by the warm solicitations of the friends, we were prevailed upon to spend the night there. That night I preached for them to the (professedly, at least) edification of some. The next day we reached Hancock, and on the next day we

¹⁹ John Swartswelder was one of four German-speaking Methodist preachers (along with Jacob Gruber, Henry Boehm and William Folks) mentioned by Asbury as possible missionaries to reach the German-speaking in America. Asbury never saw this realized. Swartswelder apparently was not assigned a circuit at this time and was living in Carlisle. The missing four pages of the original manuscript appear to include material about Swartswelder, his doctrines, and his friendship with Reiley. It is unclear what is meant by "Swartswelder's doctrines," but Reiley seems to view them unfavorably – even though he apparently asked Swartswelder to hold his mother's funeral.

²⁰ George Duffield III (1794-1868) was the Presbyterian pastor in Carlisle. He was a "new light" Presbyterian who supported Methodist-like revivalism. He is the father of Presbyterian pastor George Duffield Jr. (1818-1888) who wrote the words to "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus."

reached Cumberland, the place of our destination, just as night had spread his sable mantle abroad on the land.

On the next day, our first quarterly meeting for the year commenced at Old Town. While I was preaching on Sabbath, one who later became a preacher himself obtained the witness of his acceptance with God.

At Cumberland we met with a cordial reception and an agreeable society, but the tenement provided for us was a very poor concern. My colleague this year was a warm and friendly man. The forepart of the year he did well, but toward the close he had well nigh led to great difficulty by not adhering strictly to this very wholesome advice: "Converse sparingly, and conduct prudently, with women." Our presiding elder, Brother L. Fochtig, was both popular and useful.

Allegheny at that time embraced a large extent of mountainous country with many fertile valleys interspersed. It extended from Cumberland by Rocky Gap to Flintstone, then to Beans Cove,²¹ thence to Friends Cove²² near Bloody Run,²³ then to Cumberland Valley,²⁴ thence up Wills Creek to Savage Mountain, thence by Frostburg to Georges Creek, thence beyond Westernport, then down to Cressoptown, thence across to a settlement near Nobley Mountain, thence to Breakneck Mountain, thence within twelve miles of Bath, thence across to Sideling Hill, thence up the river by the Horseshoe to Old Town. It required strength, fortitude, and perseverance.

[This ends the Central Pennsylvania portion of Reiley's journal.]

²¹ The story of Beans's Cove is representative of the other Bedford County PA points mentioned by Reiley. This community is five miles into Pennsylvania and on the Flintstone Creek, part of the Potomac watershed. It is very easily accessible from Maryland, but difficult to reach from Pennsylvania. The first Methodist structure there, a log cabin, was erected in 1818, and the present frame church was erected in 1881. The region is so southern-oriented that the congregation chose to identify with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Following the 1939 union of the ME and MES and MP denominations to form the Methodist Church, it was placed on a reorganized circuit but still served by the Baltimore Conference. It wasn't until 1962, when the conference lines were adjusted to follow the state boundaries, that Beans's Cove became part of the Central Pennsylvania Conference. Even then, the lack of convenient access from Pennsylvania posed a problem and Central Pennsylvania never provided pastoral support. The congregation was listed as TBS and served by a local pastor from the Baltimore Conference until 1964, when it stopped being listed and regular church services ceased. At present, the building and cemetery are minimally maintained by an informal group of local residents.

²² Rainsburg is the main community in Friends Cove. At one time Rainsburg Methodism boasted three congregations (one ME, one MES, and one MP) and a school (Rainsburg Seminary). Methodist presence there gradually dwindled and finally ended in 1999 when all the members of the former ME congregation either withdrew or were transferred to other United Methodist churches. The building was sold to the borough of Rainsburg.

²³ Bloody Run is Everett – on a branch of the Juniata River and always served from Pennsylvania, it is mentioned only as reference point and not because it was part of Reiley's Allegheny circuit.

²⁴ While the Cumberland Valley, whose main features are US Route 220 and Evitts Creek, once contained a strong Methodist presence, just two UM congregations, the only two surviving Bedford County churches that came into the Central Pennsylvania Conference as a result of the 1962 state boundary realignment, remain from the area covered by Reiley's Allegheny circuit: Bethel (former ME) and Centerville (former MP).

Appendix A. Obituary of Samuel Davis (1793-1822)

Samuel Davis – born in the village of New Holland, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, October 7, 1793. In the year 1805 his parents moved to Shippensburg, Cumberland County, in the same state, where with them Samuel lived until he entered the itinerant connection.

His education prior to entering the ministry consisted of the English and German languages; and during the latter part of his itinerating he paid some attention to Greek and Hebrew.

From his childhood he was remarkably moral, never having been heard to swear an oath, or to do any act to offend or grieve his parents. When a child, and up to the time of his conversion, he was impressed with the necessity of experimental religion. This, however, he did not obtain until the year 1812. At a camp meeting in the month of August of that year he was encouraged to seek, and in his seeking found, redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of his sins. His conversion was powerful and clear, and marked with indications of his future usefulness in the church of Christ.

Being fully persuaded of his call to the ministry, he entered the traveling connection, and filled the following stations, viz., Huntingdon, 1814; Bottetourt, 1815; Huntingdon again, 1816; Aughwick, 1817; Carlisle, 1818; Pittsburgh, 1819 and 1820; Baltimore, 1821; and in 1822 he was appointed to the Foundry station in the city of Washington, where he ended his life and labours.

In all those stations he served as a faithful minister of Christ. He neglected not the gifts bestowed upon him, but by close application to reading and meditation he proved himself to be an able minister of the gospel, rightly dividing the word of truth. A divine unction attended the word preached by him to the awakening of many. Hundreds are living who were seals to his ministry, and in eternity will, it is hoped, magnify Jehovah for raising up in their day such a burning and a shining light.

At a camp meeting in Prince George's County, Maryland, a few days previous to his last illness, in conversation with one of his brethren, he observed that he was fully fixed in the resolution of devoting all his life to the Lord Jesus in the service of his church. After he returned to his station from this camp meeting, he was taken ill of a bilious fever. As long as he retained his mental faculties, he appeared not to be apprehensive of sudden dissolution; but the disease being deeply radicated in his system, it soon put medical skill to defiance. His affliction lasted two weeks, during which time he suffered with uniform patience and resignation.

He died on Sunday morning, September 16, 1822; and although from the Friday evening before his death he was deprived of the power of speech, so that he could not express his religious feelings, yet we have the assurance of his eternal redemption in this, and similar portions of sacred Scripture: "*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.*"

**Appendix B. Huntingdon Circuit
1814-15 Second Quarterly Conference Business**

The following account was recorded during James Reiley's year on Huntingdon circuit. It is taken from a manuscript minute book at the conference archives, with only the spelling corrected. The original appears to reflect the German presence in area Methodism, as many of the key words are capitalized and "house" is consistently spelled "haus."

The account is significant as it represents one of the earliest documentations of the consideration of a charge parsonage – in Central Pennsylvania, if not in the entire Methodist Episcopal denomination. As long as Asbury lived, he discouraged the use of married men as circuit riders – and marriage often meant leaving the itinerant ministry. Circuits typically covered hundreds of miles and took weeks to complete – and the circuit rider had no use for a parsonage, as he slept in various homes or facilities around the circuit.

James Reiley was possibly the first married itinerant to serve the Huntingdon circuit, and the problems he describes in his journal regarding finding suitable housing for his bride undoubtedly led to this discussion. Unfortunately, beginning with January 1815 there is a 10 year gap in the minutes, and it is not known whether a parsonage was actually purchased as a result of this motion.

July 30, 1814

The conference next decided to take into consideration the propriety of building or purchasing a house for the preacher and was unanimous of opinion that a house should be purchased for that purpose. It was then moved where the house should be bought and it was unanimously agreed that it should be in Huntingdon. Conference next proceeded to nominate trustees for the same and the following persons were unanimously chosen: Thomas Weston, Jacob Anthony, Hugh Smith, George McCrum, William Milton, Abraham Vanteen, and David Newingham.

Rev. Robert Burch, presiding elder

A. Vanteen, secretary