

## History of the Sheshequin Charge, Wyoming Conference

by Rev. John M. Grimes, 1868

*[editor's note: The conference archives website ([susumc.org→resources→archives](http://susumc.org/resources/archives)) contains several pastor data bases that give personal information for pastors and spouses, a list of all appointments served, etc. Every pastor in this article appears in either the Wyoming Conference data base or (if he served before the 1852 creation of the Wyoming Conference and never served in the Wyoming Conference) in the Northern Tier data base. For that reason, footnotes for pastors give minimal information, while footnotes for lay persons are more detailed. Names followed by [?] represent the best rendering of the handwriting in the original document for otherwise unidentifiable persons.]*

This charge is situated in Sheshequin, Bradford County PA. It was formed in 1866 by the division of the Litchfield circuit to include five appointments: Ghent, Sheshequin, Butternut Ridge, Union Corners, Hornbrook.<sup>1</sup> The gospel was first preached in Sheshequin by Moravian missionaries to the Indians who inhabited this region in large numbers. Some of the first white settlers in this place were General Spalding<sup>2</sup>, Eliphilet Gustin<sup>3</sup>, Elijah Horton<sup>4</sup>, Nathan Brown<sup>5</sup>, Judge Gore<sup>6</sup> and Esquire Gore<sup>7</sup>.

Mr. David Horton,<sup>8</sup> an aged resident here, informed me that Esquire Gore stated to him that in the massacre in the Wyoming Valley on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of July, 1778, he ran from the Indians and secreted himself in the reeds by the river – and some other man came down the bank, and the Indians in pursuit scalped him, then

---

<sup>1</sup> While the original document consistently refers to this location as Horn Brook, this article uses the modern one-word designation Hornbrook.

<sup>2</sup> Simon Spalding (1742-1814) is buried in the Sheshequin Valley Cemetery. A distinguished military leader, he and his family led the first settlers from the Wyoming Valley to Sheshequin in 1783.

<sup>3</sup> Eliphilet Gustin (1766-1860) is buried in the Gustin Cemetery, off US 6 near Luthers Mills. He came to the area in 1792 and is mentioned that year in Colbert's diary. He afterwards moved across the river to the Burlington area. He is mentioned later in connection with the founding of the Hornbrook class.

<sup>4</sup> Elijah Horton (1739-1821) is mentioned 3 times in 1793 in Colbert's diary. He is the father-in-law of Eliphilet Gustin and is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery. His son Joshua is mentioned later in connection with the founding of the Hornbrook class.

<sup>5</sup> Nathan Brown is mentioned in Colbert's diary – 6 times in 1792 and 11 times in 1793. He lived in Sheshequin and was a layman who "spoke" (apparently quite well) on Scripture texts.

<sup>6</sup> Obadiah Gore (1744-1821) was originally from Connecticut. He served under George Washington, settled in Sheshequin in 1783, and was for many years an associate judge of the county court. He is buried in the Gore Cemetery in Sheshequin.

<sup>7</sup> Avery Gore (1765-1847) is the son of Obadiah Gore. He is buried in the Gore Cemetery in Sheshequin.

<sup>8</sup> David Horton (1788-1875) was the grandson of the previously mentioned Elijah Horton. He was a veteran of the War of 1812 and is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery.

gave a whoop, and then went away without discovering him. He then swam the river and escaped. Soon after he came up and settled in Sheshequin. The Indians uniting with the British and Tories committed awful atrocities upon the inhabitants in the nearby settlements in Pennsylvania and New York that in consequence of which General Sullivan was dispatched with an army and in August 1779 drove them out of Sheshequin and the valleys of the Susquehanna.

Sheshequin charge was indicated in the old Tioga circuit books. The first famed circuit rider in these parts, as I know from Dr. George Peck's excellent work<sup>9</sup> to which I am indebted for some of the facts, connected with the early history of this charge was William Colbert<sup>10</sup> – the first preacher that traveled said circuit. He preached in Sheshequin on December 13, 1792, from Matthew 5:41 – which was the first sermon delivered by an itinerant Methodist minister here, so far as I can ascertain. Mr. Colbert met with a narrow escape in this place on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of February 1792 as he was passing through the narrows upon the ice. It broke, letting him and his horse into the river. With great difficulty he succeeded in getting out.

The first quarterly meeting held in this place of which we have any account was conducted by Rev. Thornton Fleming<sup>11</sup> and Rev. William Colbert. In July 1807, Bishop Asbury preached at the house of Judge Gore in Sheshequin from John 7:17.

Among the honored and decorated pioneers who travelled here in early days as circuit preachers or presiding elders were the Rev. Messrs. Loring Grant<sup>12</sup>,

---

<sup>9</sup> *Early Methodism within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference from 1788 to 1828*, published in 1860.

<sup>10</sup> The entire 2014 volume of *The Chronicle* was dedicated to the parts of the diary of William Colbert (1764-1833) that cover his ministry within our present Susquehanna Conference. Several of the laypersons in this article are mentioned (and given footnotes) in that volume.

<sup>11</sup> Thornton Fleming (1764-1846) rose to prominence in western Pennsylvania and served as a district superintendent for 14 years. He wrote a letter to George Washington pledging the support of Methodists during the Whiskey Rebellion – and he preserved the President's reply, which was published in the 1834 conference journal. He is the author of the 1834 book *History of Methodism in the West*. He is mentioned frequently in Colbert's diary

<sup>12</sup> Loring Grant (1789-1870) served the area in 1809 when it was part of the Philadelphia Conference, and in 1810 when it became a part of the newly-formed Genesee Conference. He found his wife, who was from the Meshoppen area, while serving here and was instrumental in the founding of Albion College in Albion MI, where he is buried.

Valentine Cook<sup>13</sup>, Gideon Draper<sup>14</sup>, George Lane<sup>15</sup>, George Harmon<sup>16</sup>, Horace Agard<sup>17</sup>, Dr. George Peck<sup>18</sup>, Marmaduke Pearce<sup>19</sup>, John Griffin<sup>20</sup>, Andrew Peck<sup>21</sup>, Gaylord Judd<sup>22</sup>, George Evans<sup>23</sup>, Dr. Paddock<sup>24</sup>, and D. A. Shepard.<sup>25</sup>

These men made great sacrifices and endured hardships as good soldiers for Christ. The roads were new and rough and the circuits large. In 1810, the circuit including this place had 30 appointments. As before indicated, the Sheshequin charge now has five appointments.

---

<sup>13</sup> Valentine Cook (c1764-1822) was superintendent from 1793 to 1796 over a large area that included all of what later became the Wyoming and Oneida conferences and more.

<sup>14</sup> Gideon Draper (1780-1861) served in the early days before traditional conference boundaries were set. He served Northumberland and Wyoming circuits before 1808 when they were part of the Baltimore Conference, and he was superintendent of the Susquehanna District in 1810 when it was moved from the Philadelphia Conference to the newly-formed Genesee Conference.

<sup>15</sup> George Lane (1784-1859) was an 1810 charter member of the Genesee Conference and an 1852 charter member of the Wyoming Conference.

<sup>16</sup> George Harmon (1783-1878) served as superintendent of the Susquehanna District, Genesee Conference 1812-15. Following the death of 100-year-old Henry Boehm in 1875, George Harmon became for a while the oldest living Methodist preacher in the world.

<sup>17</sup> Horace Agard (1875-1850) served the Wyalusing circuit twice and was superintendent of the Susquehanna District 1826-29, all while the Sheshequin area was in the Genesee Conference.

<sup>18</sup> George Peck (1797-1876) was one of five noted Peck brothers (including a bishop) to enter the Methodist ministry. He also served as a district superintendent and denominational editor. Father of two Methodist preachers and father-in-law of another, he is buried in the Forty Fort Cemetery.

<sup>19</sup> Marmaduke Pearce (1776-1852) also served as a district superintendent and is buried in the Beach Grove [see the previous article on the Beach Haven charge] Cemetery near Beach Haven, Luzerne County.

<sup>20</sup> John Griffin (1784-1844) served the early Wyalusing circuit several times from 1816 to 1827 and was a profound influence in the area.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Peck (1800-1887) was a brother to George Peck and the father of two Methodist preachers.

<sup>22</sup> Gaylord Judd (1784-1859) is intimately connected with the area and its ecclesiastical history. He received his license (Philadelphia Conference) from Gideon Draper in 1809, but did not commit to the itinerant ministry until 1821 (Genesee Conference) – following the death of his first wife. He served area circuits (Wyalusing, Tioga and Wyoming) 1821-25, where he met his second wife. He was an 1829 charter member of the Oneida Conference and an 1852 charter member of the Wyoming Conference. He is the father of three ordained ME preachers – one of whom served as missionary to India with the noted William Butler, and other of whom was killed as a chaplain in the Civil War – and the grandfather of a fourth.

<sup>23</sup> George Evans (1799-1849) served the Sheshequin churches in the 1830's when they were part of the Orwell charge of the Oneida Conference. His third wife, nee Armenia Fellows (1803-1880) is a sister to the Rev. Nathan Fellows mentioned later in connection with the Hornbrook church.

<sup>24</sup> Zachariah Paddock (1798-1879) was ordained in the Genesee Conference and an 1829 charter member of the Oneida Conference and an 1852 charter member of the Wyoming Conference.

<sup>25</sup> David Adkins Shepard (1802-1876) played a major role Sheshequin Valley Methodism and will be mentioned extensively later in this article.

## Ghent



Ghent ME Church



church site: building razed in the 1960's

The society at Ghent was formed in 1837 by Rev. Joseph Towner<sup>26</sup> and was connected with Orwell circuit. James McCabe<sup>27</sup> was the first class leader. The original members were Reuben Young<sup>28</sup> and wife, Sylvester Horton<sup>29</sup> and wife, Sarah Baldwin<sup>30</sup>, Abram Payne<sup>31</sup> and daughters, and Esther Wolfe. Most of them were converted in a meeting held in 1836. From an old class book which has been carefully preserved I gathered the following information in regard to this class.

---

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Towner (1797-1854) served as an itinerant in the Genesee Conference for only two years, 1826-28, but then he became an active local pastor who was arguably the most significant local person in area Methodism. He is the father of the later-mentioned Isaac Pratt Towner. He is also the father of noted musician John Griffin Towner (1825-1870), named after the aforementioned Rev. John Griffin, who sang with P.P. Bliss in the regionally famous "Yankee Boys" quartet. John Griffin Towner is in turn the father of the even more noted gospel song writer Daniel Brink Towner (1850-1919).

<sup>27</sup> James McCabe (1816-1903) was born in Ireland, came to America in 1836 and to Bradford County in 1837. In 1839 he married Polly Towner, daughter of Rev. Joseph Towner, and he later moved to Towanda where he became a prominent grocer.

<sup>28</sup> Reuben E. Young (1815-1893) and Sarah Emily Horton Young (1815-1885) are buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery. Mrs. Young is a great-granddaughter the previously mentioned Elijah Horton.

<sup>29</sup> Sylvester Horton (1814-1862) was a brother to Mrs. Reuben Young. He and his wife, nee Abigail Cooley (1799-1862) moved to the Midwest sometime after 1852.

<sup>30</sup> Mrs. Sarah M. (nee Burt) Baldwin (1782-1872) was the wife of a Mr. Vine Baldwin. Neither of them had family ties in Sheshequin, and they later moved to Chemung NY.

<sup>31</sup> Abraham Payne (1780-1861) is buried in the Ghent Cemetery. His daughters Malinda (1815-1842) and Harriet (1820-1903), who later married a Mr. Cornelius Vansice, are buried in the Sheshequin Valley Cemetery

In 1841, Alanson Benjamin<sup>32</sup> and Daniel Torry<sup>33</sup> preached here with success.

In 1842, N.I. Devill<sup>34</sup> preached here and several persons were converted and united with this society. This year Reuben Young was appointed leader.

In 1847, Levi Pitts<sup>35</sup> preached here and held a series of meetings. The church was revived, backsliders reclaimed, and sinners converted. One evening some rude fellows came forward professedly for prayers. Mr. Pitts had them kneel near the stove and a hot fire made, and it gave them a scare that they did not care to make again.

In 1849, P. Bartlett<sup>36</sup> and J. Towner preached here. Burgess Barnum<sup>37</sup> was appointed class leader.

In 1850, J.W. Davison<sup>38</sup> was the preacher in charge.

In 1851, the Ghent society was connected with the Litchfield circuit, which had just been formed. This year Joseph Towner preached here as a supply.

In 1852, the Wyoming Conference was formed by a division of the Oneida Conference. Ghent class was now in the Litchfield charge, Owego District, which had just been formed in the Wyoming Conference. Joseph Towner and Silas Barner<sup>39</sup> were employed to travel the circuit and God blessed their labors in Ghent. The class was strengthened and its numbers increased.

In 1853, Silas Barner preached here and was recommended. And at the next session of the Wyoming Annual Conference he was received.

---

<sup>32</sup> Alanson Benjamin (1802-1888) served the Orwell charge 1841-43. His wife died 6/7/1843 and is buried in the Orwell Hill Cemetery.

<sup>33</sup> Daniel Torry (1800-1857) served the Orwell charge 1841-43. He became an 1852 charter member of the Wyoming Conference.

<sup>34</sup> The rendering of this name is uncertain. For 1842-43, the Oneida Conference journal lists Alanson Benjamin and Philo Blackman.

<sup>35</sup> Levi Pitts (1807-1890) served the Orwell charge 1847-48. He became an 1852 charter member of the Wyoming Conference.

<sup>36</sup> Philip Bartlett (1811-1899) served the Orwell charge 1849-50. He also had served there, along with George Evans, 1848-49 – but that year is not covered in this account. He became an 1852 charter member of the Wyoming Conference.

<sup>37</sup> Nathan Burgess Barnum (1812-1873) is buried in the Tioga Point Cemetery at Athens PA.

<sup>38</sup> John Wiles Davison (1810-1876) served the Orwell charge 1850-51. He became an 1852 charter member of the Wyoming Conference.

<sup>39</sup> Silas Barner (1807-1886) served Litchfield 1852-54.

In 1854, W.B. Kinney<sup>40</sup> was the preacher in charge. Darwin Gillette<sup>41</sup> was now appointed leader of the Ghent class, which office he now holds.

In 1855, William B. Kinney was again the preacher. This place is now in the Wyalusing District, just formed. In September, Miss Nancy Watkins<sup>42</sup>, a member of this class, died in the Lord.

In 1856, C.L.F. Howe<sup>43</sup> was employed as the preacher here.

In 1857, Joseph Whitham<sup>44</sup> was the preacher in charge. He labored faithfully, enforced the Discipline, pruned the society, and received several preachers on probation. An esteemed member and exhorter was removed from the society by death, a record of which I find in Whitham's handwriting: "Benjamin F. Watkins, exhorter, departed this life Sunday, December 11, 1858, by a fall and dislocation of the neck. The memory of the just is blessed." Mr. Whitham preached the funeral sermon of the deceased in the Universal Church in Sheshequin, and as he was about to announce a hymn, a member of the choir suggested that it would be best to sing out of the Universalist Hymn Book. Mr. Whitham replied, "Thank you, sir. We can do our own singing. Mr. Watkins was a Methodist, and I think it best to bury him in Methodist order."

In 1858, P. Towner<sup>45</sup> preached in this place.

In 1860, J.W. Hewitt<sup>46</sup> was the pastor. Under his labors the Ghent society prospered. He found a site and made arrangements for the erection of a parsonage.

In 1861, N. B. Marcy<sup>47</sup> was the preacher in charge. He labored faithfully and his labors were blessed in the conversion of two only.

---

<sup>40</sup> William B. Kinney (1828-1891) served Litchfield 1854-56.

<sup>41</sup> Darwin Tyron Gillette (1821-1882) is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery.

<sup>42</sup> Miss Nancy M. Watkins (1828-1855) appears to have been buried in Newburgh, Orange County NY – although her father Benjamin F. Watkins (1804-1857), mother Sarah E. [DePuy] Watkins (1807-1887) and most (if not all) of her siblings are interred in the Sheshequin Valley Cemetery. As she was the first of the family to die, at the age of 27, and her mother is known to have been born in New York, it seems Nancy was buried in her mother's home area. The DePuy surname was very common in Orange County New York.

<sup>43</sup> Charles LaFayette Howe (1824-1883) served Litchfield 1856-57 as a supply preacher. In 1856 he was admitted on trial to the East Genesee Conference.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Whitham (1808-1863) served Litchfield 1857-58.

<sup>45</sup> Isaac Pratt Towner (1822-1887) served Litchfield 1858-59. He is the son of the previously mentioned Joseph Towner.

<sup>46</sup> Jasper W. Hewitt (1816-1899) served Litchfield 1869-61.

<sup>47</sup> Nicholson B. Marcy (1831-1861) died while serving here in December 1861.

In 1862 and 1863, P.F. Bridgeman<sup>48</sup> preached here with some success.

In 1864, Rev. F. Chubbuck<sup>49</sup> preached on this charge.

In 1865, Rev. George P. Porter, presiding elder, employed A.B. Eckert<sup>50</sup> to supply this charge. He held a series of meetings in Ghent. The church was revived and souls converted. Brother Eckert was recommended by the quarterly conference as a suitable preacher to be ordained deacon, and at the ensuing session of the Wyoming Annual Conference he was ordained by Bishop Thompson.

In 1866, at the Wyoming Annual Conference, the Sheshequin charge was formed and embraced the territory and appointments heretofore mentioned. A.B. Eckert was now employed as a supply. The Ghent class continued to prosper. October 12, 1866, Samuel Davidson<sup>51</sup> a local deacon united with this class by letter. He was ordained by Bishop Janes in July 1851.<sup>52</sup>

On April 22, 1867, the writer (J.M. Grimes<sup>53</sup>) was appointed to labor upon the Sheshequin charge. Upon my arrival upon the circuit I was kindly received. In consequence of a long rain followed by high water that covered the bridges, it was some time before I could move my goods and get settled in Ghent. Here I found a good society to be known. I preach once in two weeks. Their rule is to pay up their percentage quarterly. The Sabbath School here this season has been interesting.

On May 28, Rev. Asa Brooks<sup>54</sup> attended at the meeting at Ghent for the elder. He preached the sermon and then held the quarterly meeting, which was interesting and profitable. The Ghent class numbers 1 local deacon, 24 members, and 7 probationers.

---

<sup>48</sup> Peter Goff Bridgeman (1804-1872) served Litchfield 1862-64.

<sup>49</sup> Francis Steel Chubbuck (1812-1890) served Litchfield 1864-65. According to the conference journal, he was also appointed for 1865-66 and retired in 1866 – but apparently he did not serve the entire second year (if at all), and the district superintendent employed supply pastor Eckert. Eckert gave the 1865-66 statistical report for the Litchfield charge.

<sup>50</sup> Alexander Blake Eckert (1820-1883) served Litchfield 1865-66 and the new Sheshequin charge 1866-67.

<sup>51</sup> Samuel Davidson Sr. (1805-1879) was born in New England and is buried in the Ghent Cemetery. He is not to be confused with his son Samuel Davidson Jr. (1845-1913), who was also active in the charge.

<sup>52</sup> Edmund Storer Janes (1807-1876) was elected a bishop in 1844. In July 1851 he presided at the final session of the Oneida Conference that included what became the Wyoming Conference in 1852. Samuel Davidson was living in Litchfield in 1851.

<sup>53</sup> John M. Grimes 1812-1891) served Sheshequin 1867-68.

<sup>54</sup> Asa Brooks (1819-1897) was currently serving in Nichols NY, which was in the same Owego District as Sheshequin.

### Sheshequin<sup>55</sup>

In this place we have not a class. Extra efforts have been made here for the conversion of souls with but little effect. A class was formed here which has long since become extinct.

Unfortunately this part of Sheshequin was mostly settled by Universalists. Their descendants imbibed this doctrine and have been vigilant in keeping out doctrines opposed to it.

The following communication comes from Mr. C. Park<sup>56</sup> of Athens PA, formerly a resident of this place.

“In the year 1829, the Rev. David A. Shepard<sup>57</sup> came into the Sheshequin Valley to preach the gospel. He found but one Methodist there, a man by the name of Robinson. At that time Universalism reigned without a rival in the place. Mr. Shepard knew this. He commenced preaching the plain truths of the gospel, presenting them in the most gentle and pleasing manner. He drew large congregations and the Holy Spirit attended the word, and salvation was the fruit.

“C. Park, a son of a Universalist minister and a zealous advocate of that doctrine, was brought under powerful conviction of sin and to receive remission of sins through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. His wife also was made a subject of converting grace. Mr. Shepard also had a revival at Break Neck<sup>58</sup>, and many were added to the church.

“Mr. Shepard never battled Universalism. He remarked to a friend, ‘I never attempt to tear a man’s house down over his head if it be ever so poor, but build him a better one and invite him into it.’ A good philosophy.

---

<sup>55</sup> Sheshequin may be reached from Ulster by going east (across the Susquehanna River) for  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to Sheshequin Road, and then going north for  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile. Originally home to the major village in the area, the site is now a row of suburban-type homes.

<sup>56</sup> Chester Park (1802-1881) is the son of Universalist preacher Moses Park (1766-1817) and Mary Spalding Park (1776-1842), the daughter of the aforementioned General Simon Spalding.

<sup>57</sup> David A. Shepard was sent to the Owego circuit of the newly-created Oneida Conference. That circuit embraced wide area that covered most of what later became the Owego District.

<sup>58</sup> Breakneck Hill is a few miles above Towanda, on the east side of the river. When General Sullivan marched against the Indians in 1779 he had great difficulty getting his military equipment down this slope, which drops abruptly 180 feet to the river. There is a legend that an Indian squaw, on a wager for whiskey, leaped to her death from this spot.

“Rev. Messrs Sayre<sup>59</sup> and Nash<sup>60</sup> followed Mr. Shepard and formed a society, or class. They were succeeded by Rev. Sophronius H. Stocking and Marcus K. Cushman. In 1829, C. Park was licensed to exhort. Rev. J.W. McKee and Samuel B. Yarrington, Moses Adams and Horace Agard, Ebenezer Colson and Charles W. Harris and Joseph Towner all labored in the Valley. In 1834, the leading members of the class removed from Sheshequin and the class became extinct.”

### Butternut Ridge<sup>61</sup>



North Ghent M.E. Church – now the Trinket Community Center

This class was probably formed by Joseph Towner, with David Struble<sup>62</sup> as the first class leader. The original members were Cynthia Struble, Peter Green,<sup>63</sup> Eliza Green, Archibald Sheeler,<sup>64</sup> Catherine Sheeler, Morgan Thompson,<sup>65</sup> Sarah A. Thompson and Susan Eavener [?].

<sup>59</sup> John Sayre (dates unknown) served the Wyalusing charge 1828-29

<sup>60</sup> Charles Nash (1802-1868) served the Wyalusing charge 1828-30. He is the father of gospel songwriter Kate E. Purvis, and much information about him appears in the article "Kate E. Purvis: Little Known and Often Cited" in the 2010 issue of *The Chronicle*, pages 3-14.

<sup>61</sup> This class ceased to exist and then was re-formed in March 1880 as North Ghent. A building was erected in 1880 and services were discontinued in 1998. The structure was sold and now functions as a community building. The adjacent cemetery is known by a variety of names: Butternut Ridge, Ghent, and Horton.

<sup>62</sup> David Struble (1821-1900) and his wife Cynthia [Merrill] Struble (1827-1862) are buried in the Orange Hill Cemetery at Litchfield.

<sup>63</sup> Peter Green (1807-1882) and his wife Eliza Ann [Chandler] Green (1818-1871) are buried in the Orange Hill Cemetery at Litchfield.

<sup>64</sup> Archibald A. Sheeler (1812-1894) and his wife Catherine Sheeler (1817-1902) are buried in the Sheshequin Valley Cemetery. When the class re-formed in 1880 as North Ghent, Archey Sheeler was among those who subscribed to erect the church building.

<sup>65</sup> Morgan G. Thompson (1813-1871) and his wife Sarah Ann Thompson (c1816 - ?) are buried in the Sheshequin Valley Cemetery. When the class re-formed in 1880 as North Ghent, their son

In 1850, the class belonged to the Nichols charge.<sup>66</sup> This year Abram Dingman<sup>67</sup> and his wife united with the class.

In 1851, the Litchfield circuit was formed, and the society was connected with it.

In 1853, A. Dingman was appointed leader and is still leader of the class.

In 1856, C.L.F. Howe held a series of meetings in which several persons embraced religion and united with this class. This class numbers ten members and five probationers.

### Union Corners



Union Corners UMC

Formerly the Shores Hill class, this class was formed in an early day of Methodism in this region. Some of the first members were King Shores<sup>68</sup>, Betsy

---

Isaac M. Thompson (1846-1927) was on the committee to select the grounds for the church building.

<sup>66</sup> Nichols is just across the state line in Tioga County NY.

<sup>67</sup> Abraham Dingman (1824-1901) and his wife Lucretia [Bush] Dingman (1828-1881) are buried in the Sheshequin Valley Cemetery. When the class was re-formed in 1880 as North Ghent, Abraham Dingman was designated Sunday School superintendent.

<sup>68</sup> Anthony King Shores (1793-1850) was one of eight children of the original settler Samuel Shores (1755-1825), who came from New Jersey in 1795. His wife Betsy, nee Elizabeth Horton (1808-1878) is a first cousin to the David Horton who provided Rev. Grimes with information for this article.

Shores, Caleb Shores<sup>69</sup>, Anna Shores, Joshua Shores<sup>70</sup>, Nathaniel Shores<sup>71</sup> and his wife. King Shores was the class leader and also an exhorter.

This class was faithful, had glowing meetings and revivals, and accessions added to their numbers. This class was noted for spirituality and power. In the winter of 1843, Father Hersey held a series of meetings with success. It is said that Rev. George P. Porter<sup>72</sup> (now of Grace Church at Buffalo NY) delivered his first discourse in this place.

In the fall of 1866, A.B. Eckert held a protracted meeting in which several persons were found and united with the church on probation. This class numbers 40 members and 3 probationers.

### Hornbrook



Hornbrook ME Church

---

<sup>69</sup> Caleb Shores (1789-1875) is a brother to King. His wife Anna, nee Anna Horton (1794-1876), is a sister to the aforementioned David Horton.

<sup>70</sup> Joshua Shores (1780-1884) is a brother to King. Those dates are correct; he lived to be over 100 years old – as did a sister Sarah E. Shores (1783-1888), who married a Mr. Isaac Vargason.

<sup>71</sup> Nathaniel Shores (1788-1853) is a brother to King. His wife, nee Tabitha F. Horton (1798-1861) is a sister Mrs. Caleb Shores. This family named one of their children Lorenzo Dow Shores, after the noted and eccentric Methodist evangelist Lorenzo Dow (1777-1834).

<sup>72</sup> George P. Porter (1820-1877) was living in Towanda when he was converted and joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. His official ecclesiastical record begins in 1847 when he was given a license by the Oneida Conference and supplied the Northmoreland circuit, but he likely “tested the waters” while living in Towanda and travelled the few miles north to speak at Union Corners. See Chaffee’s 1904 *History of the Wyoming Conference*, page 229.

There was a class formed in Hornbrook in an early day. The first members were Eliphalet Gustin, Jane Horton<sup>73</sup>, Sally Shores<sup>74</sup>, Joseph Elliott<sup>75</sup>, David Blackman<sup>76</sup>, Benjamin Elliott<sup>77</sup>, Joshua Horton<sup>78</sup>, Sally Brink<sup>79</sup>, Sally Horton<sup>80</sup>, Lydia Blackman<sup>81</sup> and Jemima Elliott.<sup>82</sup> David Blackman was a local preacher.

The Methodists were very persecuted here in those days. Mr. David Horton, a good man residing in the place, states that "Some sixty-seven years ago a Methodist minister was preaching very earnestly in Eliphalet Gustin's house, warning sinners to repent or they would go to hell, when a man went upon the house and threw brimstone down the chimney into the fire. Then the preacher exclaimed 'Hell is here upon the earth, for I smell the brimstone.'"

David Blackman was a very useful local preacher and died happy in the Lord. He was preaching when he had a presentment that the sermon being delivered would be his last and bade farewell to his brethren and sisters. On returning home he stated to his wife, "I believe I have preached for the last time." He selected a text that he wished his funeral sermon preached from. Much prepared for his departure, he was taken with a fever and in a few days died. When the fever turned and he was sinking, he said, "Let me go. Let me go. There are crowns in heaven." He had many warm friends, and there was a large congregation at his funeral –

---

<sup>73</sup> Miss Jane Horton (1811-1873) married Aaron Shores (1806-1893), a nephew of the aforementioned King Shores. She was one of 4 Horton sisters who married into the Shores family – 2 sets of brothers. Jane and Aaron Shores were part of the group who moved to the Midwest and they are buried in Illinois.

<sup>74</sup> Miss Sarah "Sally" Shores (1810-1894) later married William Horton (1811-1891), the son of the Joshua Horton appearing in this list.

<sup>75</sup> Joseph Elliott (1795-1875) and his sister Hannah married Horton siblings, grandchildren of the aforementioned Elijah Horton.

<sup>76</sup> David Blackman (1794-1828) is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery.

<sup>77</sup> Benjamin Elliott cannot be identified, but he is likely a brother to Joseph Elliott (husband of the Jemima Elliott in this list) and Hannah Elliott Horton (see Appendix II).

<sup>78</sup> Joshua Horton (1774-1865) is the son of the aforementioned Elijah Horton. He is buried in the Hornbrook cemetery.

<sup>79</sup> Miss Sarah "Sally" Brink (1812-1875) later married Charles Horton (1810-1886), nephew of the Joshua Horton in this list. This Horton family joined the move to the Midwest and they are buried in Nebraska.

<sup>80</sup> Sarah "Sally" Smith Horton (1771-1841) is a sister-in-law to Joshua Horton. She is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery.

<sup>81</sup> Lydia Horton Blackman (1793-1844), a niece to Joshua Horton, is the wife of David Blackman. Following the death of David, she moved to the Midwest with other family members and is buried in Illinois.

<sup>82</sup> Jemima Horton Elliott (1802-1896), a sister to Lydia Horton Blackman, is the wife of Joseph Elliott (1798-1875). The Elliotts joined the move to the Midwest, and are buried in Kansas.

which, as the parlor was too small, was attended under some trees near is house. The late Rev. Elisha Bibbins<sup>83</sup> preached his funeral sermon.

In process of time, the class in this place became extinct.<sup>84</sup>

In the winter of 1850, Rev. John Davison held a protracted meeting at Hornbrook. Several were converted. He formed a class and appointed W. Lewis Gillett leader. This class was faithful for years, but again dwindled down – and still they had Sabbath preaching.

In 1861, it was proposed that subscriptions should be circulated at Hornbrook and Butternut Ridge, and the society that subscribed the most should have the Sabbath appointment. Butternut Ridge subscribed the most and had the Sabbath preaching. The pastor sent to preach at Hornbrook on weekday evenings, but the people would not attend and the appointment was dropped.

Then they raised an amount and employed Rev. Nathan Fellows<sup>85</sup> of the Oneida [sic] Conference to preach for them in the winter of 1861. Mr. Fellows held a series of meetings at Hornbrook in which souls were converted and united with the church. The society was enlarged and connected with the Towanda charge in the East Genesee Conference until the General Conference of 1864 defined the line between the Wyoming and East Genesee Conferences here to be the Susquehanna River. Hornbrook is now the prominent appointment upon this charge.<sup>86</sup>

In 1866, A.B. Eckert held a protracted meeting here which was successful.

In March 1867, we attended a quarterly meeting at this place for the Rev. George P. Porter, presiding elder. The financial reports were good, and the prayer meeting and love feast were interesting. As we passed through the Sheshequin Narrows in going to and from said place, we did not wonder that Mr. Colbert considered its passage dangerous seventy-five years earlier – since it was at the time we passed through being icy.

In March 1867, having been stationed on this charge as heretofore noticed, I preach regularly once in two weeks at Hornbrook. The congregations are usually

---

<sup>83</sup> Elisha Bibbins (1790-1859) had served in the area and was already retired when David Blackman died in 1828 – but he lived to be an 1829 charter member of the Oneida Conference and an 1852 charter member of the Wyoming Conference. His son Robert became a preacher in the Rock River Conference

<sup>84</sup> This was mainly due to the death of David Blackman in 1828, followed by the removal of several key members, including Mrs. David Blackman, to the Midwest.

<sup>85</sup> Nathan Fellows (1807-1896) was pastor 1860-62 in Towanda, across the Susquehanna River in the East Genesee Conference. A noted evangelist, he was instrumental in the founding of the Methodist school at Mansfield PA (now Mansfield University).

<sup>86</sup> Beginning in 1869, the Sheshequin charge would be re-named the Hornbrook charge.

large and attentive. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of June, 1867, I preached the funeral sermon of Mr. Caleb Ingerson<sup>87</sup> who died of a cancer that had eaten out both of his eyes. He had been a hard drinker and gambler and trusted in Universalism for salvation. But this failing him in his dying hour, he called upon God to have mercy upon him and received the remission of sin and praised the Lord. He then said to those present, "There is a heaven and hell, for I can see them both – although I have lost my natural eyes." He exhorted all to strive to shun hell and meet him in heaven. Taking a neighbor by the hand, he said, "We have sinned together, we have spent our time and money at the tavern when our families were at home suffering." Then he exhorted him to seek salvation.

Our quarterly meetings here have been seasons of victory under the labors of Dr. H.R. Clarke<sup>88</sup> who is our able preacher and an efficient presiding elder.

August 20, 1867, Mr. William Horton died suddenly with the cholera. His funeral was attended by the citizens of Hornbrook, In January 1868, we held a series of meetings at Hornbrook and the Lord revived his work in the church. There are now 53 members and probationers in the class at this place.

### **The Sheshequin Charge**

For statistical reports for this charge, please refer to the Minutes of the Wyoming Annual Conference. The members of the quarterly conference of the Sheshequin charge are as follows.

Dr. H.R. Clarke, presiding elder  
J.M. Grimes. Preacher in charge  
Samuel Davidson, local deacon

---

<sup>87</sup> Caleb Ingerson (1811-1867) is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery.

<sup>88</sup> Horatio R. Clarke (1813-1898) was superintendent of the Wyoming District of the Wyoming Conference from 1864 to 1867.

stewards: Charles Clapper<sup>89</sup>, Rosseter Gillette<sup>90</sup>, J.F. Blackman<sup>91</sup>, Andrew Webb<sup>92</sup>, George Gard<sup>93</sup>, Isaac Young<sup>94</sup>, Chauncey Ransom<sup>95</sup>, Robert Chandler<sup>96</sup> and George Smith<sup>97</sup>

class leaders: William P. Horton<sup>98</sup>, Darwin Gillette, William H. Smith<sup>99</sup>, Abram Dingman.

### Church Edifice

We have a neat and convenient church edifice at Hornbrook with a basement. It was commenced under the labors of Rev. Nathan Fellows in 1861 and completed in 1862 under the labors of Rev. Elijah Wood.<sup>100</sup> It costs some \$2,000.

The first board of trustees were Charles Chaffee<sup>101</sup>, J.F. Blackman, Elisha Newell<sup>102</sup>, William P. Horton and Josiah Kilmer. The present board of trustees are Charles Chaffee, William P. Horton, J.F. Blackman, David Horton Jr. and Warren Gillett.

The parsonage is located at Ghent, in an eminence in the town of Sheshequin. From it may be seen in an easterly direction Orwell, beyond Rome,

---

<sup>89</sup> While this person cannot be identified, Clapper [Klapper] was a common surname in the area, and Laceyville was originally known as Clapper Hill.

<sup>90</sup> Rosseter Gillette (1826-1905) was one of the converts in the 1862 revival led by Rev. Fellows. He is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery.

<sup>91</sup> Joseph Franklin Blackman (1825-1908) is a nephew to David Blackman. He is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery.

<sup>92</sup> Andrew Webb (1810-1866) is buried in the Pond Hill Cemetery in Wysox.

<sup>93</sup> George Gard (1815-1881) was born in England and lived at Shores Hill [Union Corners]. He is buried in the Wysox Cemetery.

<sup>94</sup> Isaac L. Young (1836-1919) is the son of the aforementioned Reuben E. Young. He is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery.

<sup>95</sup> William Chauncey Ransom (1824-1889) is a son-in-law of Elijah M. Horton.

<sup>96</sup> Robert M. Chandler (1840-1912) was the steward representing the Trinket [North Ghent] appointment. He is buried in the Old Trinket Cemetery.

<sup>97</sup> George Smith (1818-1901) is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery. He is related to the other Smiths in this article – being the great-nephew of Sarah Smith Horton, the nephew of Rachel Smith Brink, and the uncle of William H. Smith.

<sup>98</sup> William Pesse Horton (1831-1906) is the son of the aforementioned David Horton – and married to the daughter of the aforementioned Reuben Young. The story is told in the 1955 charge history that one Sunday morning he left his horse in front of his home for a few minutes, and the horse came to church alone – even going by himself into his own stall in the church shed.

<sup>99</sup> William H. Smith (1839-1923) is a grandson of Elijah M. Horton. In 1886 he moved to Towanda and entered the furniture/undertaking business.

<sup>100</sup> Elijah Wood (1819-1880) served at Hornbrook during the brief period when it was part of the Towanda charge of the East Genesee Conference.

<sup>101</sup> Charles Chaffee (1812-1889) is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery. He engaged in lumbering and farming and at the time of his death was reportedly the wealthiest man in Sheshequin.

<sup>102</sup> Elisha J. Newell (1829-1897) is buried in the Hornbrook Cemetery.

and in a southerly direction the Allegheny Mountain. It was commenced in 1860 under the labors of Rev. Jasper Hewitt and completed in 1862 under the labors of Rev. Marcy. The parsonage is a good one and we have some parsonage furniture. It is located in a good neighborhood. The people are kind to the preacher and his family. It is a pleasant house in the summer; the air is pure and the scenery delightful. In the winter there are high winds and snow drifts.

Rev. Nicholson Marcy first occupied the parsonage but remained therein a short time only. He moved into it in August 1861. In the fall, while engaged in a series of protracted meetings, he took a severe cold that terminated in the congestion of the lungs and soon closed his useful life. He died in the parsonage in Ghent, Bradford County PA, on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of December 1861.

At times during his sickness, his soul appeared to be in raptures of joy. He said to his wife, "I have heard the sweetest music just now that I ever listened to." As the members of the church came in to see him, he requested them to sing and sang with them. Just before his departure he joined in singing the chorus

*There 'll be no more sorrow there.*

*There 'll be no more sorrow there.*

*In heaven above, when all is love,*

*There 'll be no more sorrow there.*

And then he passed away to sing with the angels.

March 1868

J.M. Grimes

## Appendix I – Connectional History of the Sheshequin Charge 1791-1868

<u>dates</u>	<u>circuit</u>	<u>district</u>	<u>conference</u>
1791-92	Wyoming	(lower New York)	
1792-93	Tioga	(lower New York)	
1793-94	Tioga	(Northumberland)	
1794-95	Wyoming	(Philadelphia)	
1795-96	Wyoming	(Northumberland)	
1796-98	Tioga	(Philadelphia)	
1798-99	Wyoming	(Philadelphia)	
1799-00	Tioga	(Albany)	
1800-01	Tioga	(Albany)	
1801-03	Tioga and Undailla	Albany	Philadelphia
1803-04	Tioga	Genesee	Philadelphia
1809-10	Tioga	Susquehanna	Philadelphia
1810-14	Tioga	Susquehanna	Genesee
	Wyalusing	Susquehanna	Genesee
1829-37	Wyalusing	Susquehanna	Oneida
1837-51	Orwell	Susquehanna	Oneida
1851-52	Litchfield	Susquehanna	Oneida
1852-58	Litchfield	Owego	Wyoming
1858-61	Litchfield	Wyalusing	Wyoming
1861-64	Litchfield	Wyalusing	Wyoming
	Towanda (HB only)	Elmira	East Genesee
1864-66	Litchfield	Owego	Wyoming
1866-68	Sheshequin	Owego	Wyoming
1868-	Hornbrook	Owego	Wyoming

## Notes

1. Before 1801 there were no named conferences or districts. Circuits were grouped into un-named “districts” overseen by a presiding elder.
2. From 1861 to 1864, as noted in this article, Hornbrook (HB) was served independently of the other churches on the Sheshequin charge.

Appendix II – Abbreviated Family Tree for Elijah Horton  
 providing links between persons mentioned in the article  
 giving birth-death dates and place of burial

1. Elijah Horton (1739-1821) HB
  - m. Jemimah Currie (1744-1825) HB
  2. Elizabeth Horton (1764-1830) SV
    - m. Benjamin Brink (1763-1845) SV
    3. Daniel Brink (1787-1885) IL
      - m. Rachel Smith (1792-1869)
      4. Sarah “Sally” Ann Brink (1812-1870) NE – see below
        - m. Charles Horton (1793-1873) NE – see below
    2. Richard Currie Horton (1766-1834) HB
      - m. Tabitha Jayne (1768-1831) HB
      3. Jemima Jane Horton (1786-1868) SH
        - m. John Lyons (1785-1861) SH
      3. David Horton (1788-1875) HB
        - m. Hannah Newell (1794-1875) HB
        4. William P. Horton (1831-1906) HB – also appears below
          - m. Susan L. Young (1839-1893) HB – also appears below
      3. Tabitha D. Horton (1798-1861) PC
        - m. Nathaniel Shores (1788-1853) IL – son of Samuel Shores
      3. Anna Horton (1794-1876) WY
        - m. Caleb Shores (1789-1875) WY – son of Samuel Shores
      3. Diana Horton (1804-1887) HB
        - m. Stephen Shores (1801-1877) HB – son of William Shores
      3. Jane Horton (1811-1873) IL
        - m. Aaron Shores (1806-1893) IL – son of William Shores
    2. Elijah M. Horton (1768-1835) HB
      - m. Pamela Milly Ogden (1764-1804) HB
      3. Isaac Snyder Horton (1792-1874) GH
        - m. Hannah Elliott (1792-1877) GH – sister to Joseph Snyder Elliott
        4. Sarah Emily Horton (1815-1885) HB
          - m. Reuben E. Young (1815-1893) HB
          5. Susan L. Young (1839-1893) HB – see above
            - m. William P. Horton (1831-1906) HB – see above
        5. Isaac L. Young (1836-1929) HB
          - m. Mary C. Watkins (1838-1879) HB
          - m. Sarah C. Webb (1844-1923) HB
        4. Sylvester Horton (1814-1862) KY
          - m. Abigail Cooley (1799-1862) IL
          5. Rufus Isaac Horton (1852-1930) KS
        4. Elizabeth Horton (1825-1900) GH
          - m. William Chauncey Ransom (1824-1889) GH
      3. Lydia Horton (1793-1844) IL
        - m. David Blackman (1794-1828) HB
      3. Jemima Horton (1802-1896) KS
        - m. Joseph Snyder Elliott (1798-1875) KS – brother to Hannah Elliott

- m. Abigail Bullard (1750-1815) HB
- 3. Elizabeth Horton (1808-1878) IL
  - m. Anthony King Shores (1793-1850) IL – son of Samuel Shores
  - 4. Bishop Asbury Shores (1825-1897) KS
- 3. Charles Horton (1810-1886) NE – also appears above
  - m. Sarah “Sally” Ann Brink (1812-1875) NE – also appears above
- 3. Lucinda Horton (1815-1877) HB
  - m. John B. Smith (1812-1881) HB
  - 4. William H. Smith (1839-1923) OH
- 2. Isaac Horton (1772-1861) HB
  - m. Sarah “Sally” Smith (1777-1841) HB
- 2. Joshua Horton (1771-1865) HB
  - m. Lucy Thompson (1780-1814) HB
  - 3. William Horton (1811-1891) HB
    - m. Sarah “Sally” Shores (1810-1894) HB – dau of William Shores
    - m. Lucinda Allis (1788-1846) HB
- 2. Gilbert Horton (1778-1867) IA
  - m. Amy Beardsley (1786-1872) IA
- 2. William Horton (1789-1858) HB
  - m. Esther Cowell (1787-1880) HB

There is considerable inter-marriage with the Shores family – with the children of Samuel Shore (1755-1825) and the children of Samuel’s son William Shores (1780-1840)

Places of burial are indicated as follows. More information/relationships can be obtained by entering the names and dates in the on-line findagrave.com website.

Bradford County PA cemeteries

- GH – Ghent Cemetery
- HB – Hornbrook Cemetery
- OH – Oak Hill Cemetery, Towanda
- PC – Post Cemetery, Sheshequin
- SH – South Hill Cemetery, Orwell
- SV – Sheshequin Valley Cemetery, Sheshequin
- WY – Wysox Cemetery

other places of burial

- IA – state of Iowa
- IL – state of Illinois
- KS – state of Kansas
- KY – state of Kentucky
- NE – state of Nebraska