

METHODISM IN MONTANA.

An Historical Sketch of the Protestant Missionary Pioneer.

[By the Rev. W. E. King.]

The Methodist Episcopal Church was the first Protestant body to enter Montana Territory in an organized form. The first sermon, I believe, preached in Montana was by William James, a local preacher, at Junction, in Alder Gulch below Virginia City, Madison County, in June of 1864, who organized the first Sabbath school at the same place, with Elijah Harris as Sunday School Superintendent. He also built a little log church here. Rev. Hugh Duncan, now pastor at Glendale, preached in Junction July 29, 1864. The history of Methodism in an organized form properly begins in September of 1864, when the Rev. A. M. Hough, of Lexington Avenue M. E. Church, New York City, a talented and eloquent minister, now of Los Angeles, California, was appointed superintendent of missions by Bishop Clark. At Ateshison, Kansas, he with his wife was detained on account of Indian raids. The coach on which he was to have come to this Territory, was captured by the Indians and the passengers were murdered. To this devoted man and woman belong the honors of the first Protestant missionaries to Montana.

They arrived at Virginia City, Madison County, in September of 1864, and he immediately entered upon the duties of a minister, by organizing a society, and building a log church on Coover Street. He built the first parsonage, going himself to the mountains, cutting and preparing the logs for it. Here he was superbly happy, when he could sit down in his own parsonage, with a beef hide for a carpet, and muslin for window lights, and gave thanks to Almighty God for His providential care. He remained at Virginia City two years, and in 1866 moved to Helena, where he stayed two years. In July of 1868 he was compelled to seek a more congenial clime for his wife, who was fast losing her health. The second missionary to Montana was the Rev. William McLaughlin, who was appointed to Helena in 1865, and preached the first sermon in that city from a pile of logs, from which were erected the first church in Helena. In 1868 he was stationed at Diamond City. In 1866, the Rev. James King was sent as the third missionary to this Territory and located at Virginia City. Here he began the building of a frame church and raised over \$3,000 for its completion. For some reason or another he became discouraged and suddenly left, and has never been heard of since. A mechanic's lien sold the building, and before the money could reach Virginia City from Helena, it was bought by Bishop Tuttle, of the Protestant Episcopal Church for a small sum, and is still in use by that church. The Rev. George Comfort was the fourth missionary to Montana, and reached Virginia City, June 1, 1868, and June 10, 1868, was appointed pastor of Helena and built a church at a cost of \$10,750, carrying a debt of \$1,000 on the church himself for some time. From Helena he went to Virginia City, and preached the first sermon in numerous places throughout Montana. Among them, Sheridan, Beaver Head, Madison and Bitter Root Valley, also Fish Creek, Silver Star and Upper Willow Creek. In 1870 he returned to New York, and in 1879 was again identified with the Montana work and is still here working for the Master and Presiding Elder of the Helena District. In June of 1870 the Rev. J. A. VanAuda was appointed a missionary to Montana, and in 1871 was made superintendent of the mission until 1872, when the Rocky Mountain Conference was formed. In the spring of 1871 the Rev. T. Hiff came to Helena and remained until fall, when he located

at Missoula. In June, 1872, he began the building of the Missoula church. In 1873, he was appointed to the Bozeman circuit; in 1874 he was made Presiding Elder of the S. E. Montana District. In 1873, Rev. F. A. Riggan, W. W. VanOrsdel and W. C. Shippen came to the Montana Conference. In 1880 the General Conference resolved the Montana Conference into the Montana Mission, which held its first session in Virginia City July 23rd and 24th, 1880, and Rev. F. A. Riggan was appointed Superintendent, which position he now holds.

On July 21st to 23rd, 1882, the second session of the Mission was held at Bozeman. At this meeting the Montana Christian Advocate was adopted, and Rev. J. J. Garvin was elected editor, and issued the paper at Butte. The paper is now published at Helena and edited by Rev. E. J. Bickell, and issued twice a month.

The Montana Mission is divided into two presiding elder districts. The Butte district is under the Superintendence of Rev. F. A. Riggan, who is also Presiding Elder; P. O. address, Fish Creek, M. T. The Helena District is under the Rev. George Comfort, as Presiding Elder, whose P. O. address is Bozeman, M. T. The "Montana Christian Advocate" is published at Helena twice a month, by the Rev. E. J. Bickell, at \$1 per year. There are 29 charges; 26 ministers; 23 Church buildings, and 12 parsonages, situated as follows:

Location of Church.	Name of Minister.	Val. of parsonage.	Value Church.
Supt. of Mission	Rev. F. A. Riggan	P. O.	Fish Creek
Presiding Elder	Rev. G. Comfort	"	Bozeman
Editor Advocate	Rev. E. J. Bickell	"	Helena
Helena	R. E. Smith	10,000	3,000
Butte	W. E. King	15,500	1,500
Bozeman	G. C. Stull	10,000	1,500
Virginia City	To be supplied.	10,000	2,000
Dillon	W. A. Shannon	3,000	2,500
Missoula	W. M. Nutting	2,500	1,000
Blackfoot	M. J. Hall	4,000	1,000
Walkerville	W. J. Bennett	2,000	1,000
Centerville	"	1,000	"
Glendale	Hugh Duncan	2,500	1,000
Sheridan	To be supplied.	2,000	"
Stuart	"	"	400
Stevensville	R. A. Armstrong	2,000	"
Salmon City, Ida.	O. W. Mirster	4,000	"
Blackfoot, Ida.	J. P. Morris	3,000	"
Twin Bridges	F. G. Boylan	2,500	"
Fort Benton	Joel Virgus	"	1,500
Gallatin City	E. N. Tower	2,000	"
Bozeman	D. J. Frey	1,500	"
Missoula	S. E. Schler	3,000	"
White Sulphur	Jacob Mills	4,000	1,500
Springer	W. B. Coombs	4,000	1,000
Glendale	Fred Flawth	1,500	"
Mendocino Creek	J. D. Phinney	"	"
Fall Brook	H. D. Wadsworth	"	"
Phillipsburg	John Hoking	2,000	"
Townsend	W. W. Vanorsdel	2,000	"
Sun River	To be supplied.	"	"
Billings	"	"	"
Judith Basin	"	"	"
Hot Head Lake	"	"	"
Aracoma	"	"	"
Total		\$92,000	\$17,900

Total valuation of property about \$109,900.

There are 875 full members; 325 probationers. Total membership 1,200. There are 50 Sunday schools; 300 officers and teachers, and 1,800 scholars. Total in Sunday schools, 2,100.

The church has raised during last year for churches, parsonages, support of ministers, and for benevolent purposes, \$28,400.

M. E. Church South.

This church was organized in the year of 1869 by Rev. E. J. Stanley, now of Stevensville, Missoula County, in this Territory, with a membership of ten persons, as follows: Thompson Kemper, Lucy Ann Kemper, John Delany, Mrs. John Delaney, J. W. Kemper, Mrs. Daniel S. Griffith, Mrs. George Noyes, Mrs. William Thompson, Mrs. McDonald and Simeon V. Kemper. Services were held for several years in the old school house that stood on the present site of the Central School. Rev. Stanley remained in charge for about one year, during which time the membership increased considerably. Upon his removal to Stevensville the society was without a minister, and services were irregularly held in various halls, the pulpit being filled by the Presiding Elder of this Conference and visiting clergymen, the Rev. Stanley paying several visits each year to the church he founded. This condition of affairs continued until last

year, when the Rev. J. B. Whitford became the resident minister, and immediately began agitating the subject of building a church. The project assumed definite form in September last. A lot was purchased on the corner of Idaho and Galena Streets at a cost of \$500 and the erection of a church building commenced, which is now well under way, and will be completed early in the new year. The church is 26x25 feet, with high basement for class rooms, and will cost when finished and furnished about \$4,000. The present membership is about twenty-five.

Board of Trustees are J. R. Boyce, Jr., G. W. L. Cox, J. W. Kemper, A. H. Barrett and S. V. Kemper.

Stewards: S. V. Kemper, G. W. L. Cox and J. W. Kemper.

Pastor: Rev. J. B. Whitford,

The Methodist Episcopal Church.

The history of Methodism in Butte begins in 1875, when the Rev. Hugh Duncan was appointed pastor and served the church one year, when the Rev. W. C. Shippen was appointed to this charge and served the church until 1877, when the Rev. F. A. Riggan was appointed its pastor. In 1878 he began the building of what is known as the Mountain View Methodist Episcopal Church of Butte, Montana. Lots were secured at the corner of Montana and Quartz streets, and the building was inclosed. In 1880 the Rev. Mr. Riggan was appointed Superintendent of the Montana Mission, and the Rev. J. J. Garvin received the appointment as pastor of Butte. He fin-



M. E. CHURCH.

ished the church with the exception of the class rooms, and built a parsonage and barn. In 1882 he began the publication of a paper called "Kind Words in Montana." In 1882 it was merged into "The Montana Christian Advocate." In 1883 he was appointed pastor of Helena, and the Rev. S. E. Winger succeeded him as pastor but he did not remain long as other matters called him East and the Rev. G. C. Stull was appointed in his place and remained until 1884 when the Rev. J. B. Chynnoeth was appointed to the Butte Church. In March, 1885, he was compelled to leave on account of his wife's health and the Rev. W. A. Shannon was appointed to fill out the year. In July of 1885, the Rev. W. E. King was appointed as pastor of Butte. August 17th, 1885, the church was closed for repairs. It was painted inside and out, the brick work was painted and penciled, and the inside finished off and calcimined, and the interior woodwork grained. Up to this time the total cost of the church property has been over \$15,000. Water was also brought into the parsonage. September 13th, 1885, the Rev. T. C. Hiff, of Salt Lake City, came up and reopened the church. This is now one of the finest churches in the Territory. It is situated in a commanding position so that it can be seen from almost all portions of the city. One of the attractive features of its location is that

it is near the great electric light on the Court House, which makes the night almost as light as day.

Services every Sabbath at 11 o'clock, a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Prayer meeting every Thursday evening at 7:30. Strangers and all others are cordially invited to all these services. The present membership is 110. The Rev. W. E. King is pastor.

The Sabbath school is in a flourishing condition and accomplishing much good work. The average attendance of scholars is one hundred and sixty-five and they are instructed by a corps of twelve regular teachers and eight officers. The school has a fine library in connection, consisting of upwards of three hundred well selected volumes.

St. John's Episcopal Church.

The first services of this mission were held October 20th, 1875, in the new store of Foster & Ray, The Right Rev. D. S. Tuttle preaching the sermon and Rev. M. N. Gilbert rendering the service. From that time on until the following July the Rev. M. N. Gilbert held occasional services. On Thursday, July 6th, 1876, Bishop Tuttle again visited Butte and appointed a missionary committee consisting of Charles Murphy, John Noyes, Richard E. Jones, A. M. Essler and T. C. Miles. On July 8th, 1877, Bishop Tuttle again visited Butte and confirmed nine persons. The Rev. M. N. Gilbert continued in charge of the mission until May 18th, 1878, dividing his time between Butte, Deer Lodge and other places. On September 1st, 1879, the Rev. C. O. Tillotson arrived and took charge of the mission. He continued in charge till November 20th, 1882, when he resigned. His time was also but partially devoted to Butte. March 1st, 1883, the Rev. S. C. Blackiston accepted the rectorship, and is still in charge. Until July, 1885, he was able to hold service on but three Sundays in a month. Since that time the mission has had the benefit of his entire services. At his first service in the church about 100 people were present. The attendance since has been good, with an increasing average. The present committee is composed of Frederick Gilbert, John Noyes, W. M. Jack, R. R. Hoge, J. A. Moss, S. R. Knight, and O. S. Tilton; S. R. Knight being treasurer.

Until November 13th, 1881, the services were held in different rooms in town. On that day services were held for the first time in a church building built for the purpose, but which was in an unfinished condition.

In June 1881, ground was broken for the church and on July 8th, 1882, the corner-stone was laid by the Right Rev. L. R. Brewer, Bishop of Montana, assisted by the Rev. H. C. Hutehins, of Deer Lodge, and the Rev. C. O. Tillotson, the Rector. At the first service in the new church the Right Rev. D. S. Tuttle, Bishop of Utah and Idaho, preached the sermon.

The church building is of granite in the pure gothic style of architecture, from plans prepared by Condon W. Loyd, architect, of Detroit, Michigan. The cost was about \$15,000. The chancel window was presented by W. A. Clark, Esq., in memory of his daughter, Jessie, who died in infancy. It was imported from Germany at a cost of \$1,000 and is one of the most beautiful and artistic chancel windows in the United States. The church has a seating capacity of about four hundred. With the exception of \$3,500 donated from the general fund of the church the entire cost of the church was contributed by the men and women of Butte. At the completion of the church there remained a debt of \$5,000, which has since been liquidated. During the present season a commodious and convenient rectory has been built adjoining the church on the south at a cost of \$3,000, the money for which was borrowed from the Church Building and Loan Association, of New York, at 6 per cent. interest. At the time of writing this the ladies of the church, are preparing for a fair to partially liquidate this debt. The minis-