

Historical Names of the Circuit.



Methodism is aggressive and adjustable to the circumstances and necessities of a new and sparsely settled country. I will briefly refer to the progress of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Eaton Co. for the last half century. Rev. Isaac Bennett was the first to preach a Methodist Sermon in Eaton Co. In 1839 he visited this county, preaching in Vermontville, Sunfield, Charlotte and other places. No reliable records of the establishment of classes can be found until March 1845, at which time a class was formed in the north-east part of the township in the vicinity now known as the Brown school house. The following were the original members: Jacob Fuller, Julia Fuller, Levi Carr Sprague, Cornelia Sprague, Mary Fuller, Henry Robinson, Emily Robinson, John Barrett, Margaret Barrett and Prudence Haner. Henry Robinson was a Local Preacher. Levi Carr Sprague was appointed Class Leader. He held the office until he left the world. Margaret Barrett is the only surviving member of the original class. The records show that Eaton Circuit from the establishment of Methodism in this region embraced the entire county, with perhaps the exception that Grand Ledge and Roxand were attached to Lyons Circuit. In 1851 Eaton Circuit disappears from the minutes and Charlotte appears embracing Bellevue, Kalamo, Carmel, Chester, Benton, Eaton, Sunfield and Vermontville with other preaching points. There is again a change in 1854 Charlotte and Bellevue appear as a charge

which embraces Vermontville and other points. The above charge continues until 1859 when the following charges are formed in Eaton County: Charlotte, Vermontville, Bellevue, Eaton Rapids, Dimondale and Grand Ledge. Vermontville has had a separate existence as a charge since then, with Sunfield, Benton, Chester, Carmel, Sebewa, Carlisle and a part of Kalamo, attached, ten or twelve preaching places in all. Sept. 20, 1861, Chester ceases to be a part of Vermontville Circuit. It was then placed on another charge. Oct. 29, 1862, Benton does not appear on the records any longer as a part of the Circuit it being set off with Potterville. March 14, 1863, Sunfield is divided, the north half of township is placed with another work and the south half, containing two appointments, remains as a part of Vermontville Circuit. March 23, 1878, West Sunfield changes its name to South Sunfield which was in 1881 changed to Bismarck by which name it is still known. East Sunfield or Dow appointment is separated from Vermontville on Sept. 6, 1882 and now is a part of Gresham charge. Aug. 5, 1883, the Carlisle appointment ceases to be affiliated with Vermontville. July 30, 1870, Kalamo does not longer appear on the records. Sebewa takes to itself honors in 1871, and with Burns sets up house keeping for itself. The rest of the preaching points have been attached to adjacent charges. The bounds of Vermontville charge are now Vermontville and Bismarck with contiguous territory. Eaton Circuit which once embraced the entire county, has been divided and sub-divided, etc. until we now have in the county eight pastoral charges, fifteen Methodist Episcopal Church buildings and eight parsonages.