

One component of the Self-Study, initiated by the Vital Church Initiative committee, is a presentation of the history of the Shepherd United Methodist Church. In hopes of completing this goal in a weekly, interesting and thought-provoking manner...

Did you know...

In

1855

the Reverend Charles Taylor preached the first sermon in 'Salt River'. He was born in England in 1829, and came to America as a child. Moving to Chippewa Township from New York in 1855, he with his wife, Sophrona, established a farm and was an 'honest, upright citizen' for 42 years.

This event was celebrated on Heritage Sunday, May 10, 2005 as planned by a committee of: Susan Sazima, Shirley Gallandt, George Raab, Dorothy Sponsellor, Sandy Travis, Connie Wyman and Pastor Wayne Price.



**Charles Taylor
1829-1897**

1881

saw the organization of the Ladies Aid Society for the Methodist Episcopal Church of the Salt River Charge. The purpose of the organization was to raise money for buying a lot and erecting a church. In fact, the Society bought the first load of lumber used in the building.

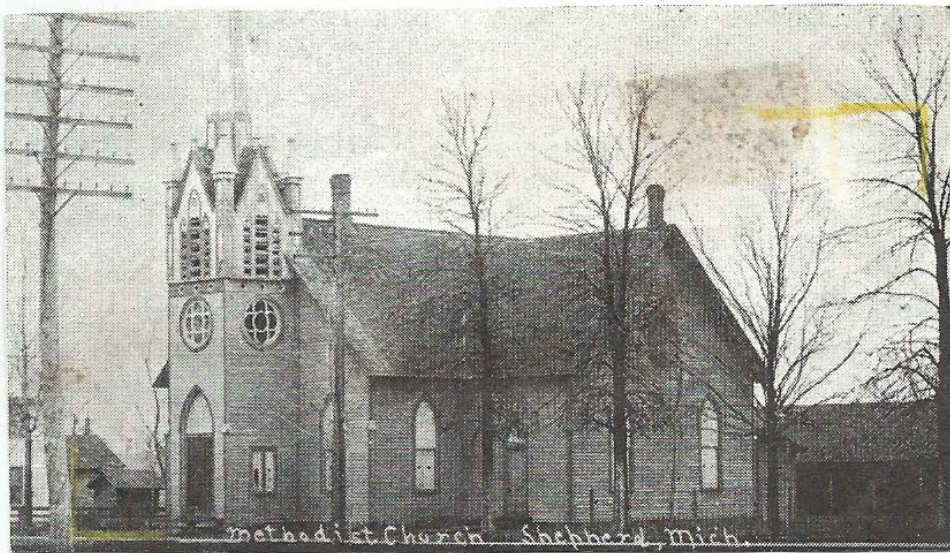


**“Other activities to raise money for the church included a challenge to bring in a dollar by personal fundraising:
Mrs. Swarthout mended clothing,
Mrs. Will Drake made and sold four cakes at 25 cents apiece,
Mrs. Goodell split one-half cord of wood for ten cents, made baseball caps for 40 cents and sewed carpet for 50 cents.”**



1882

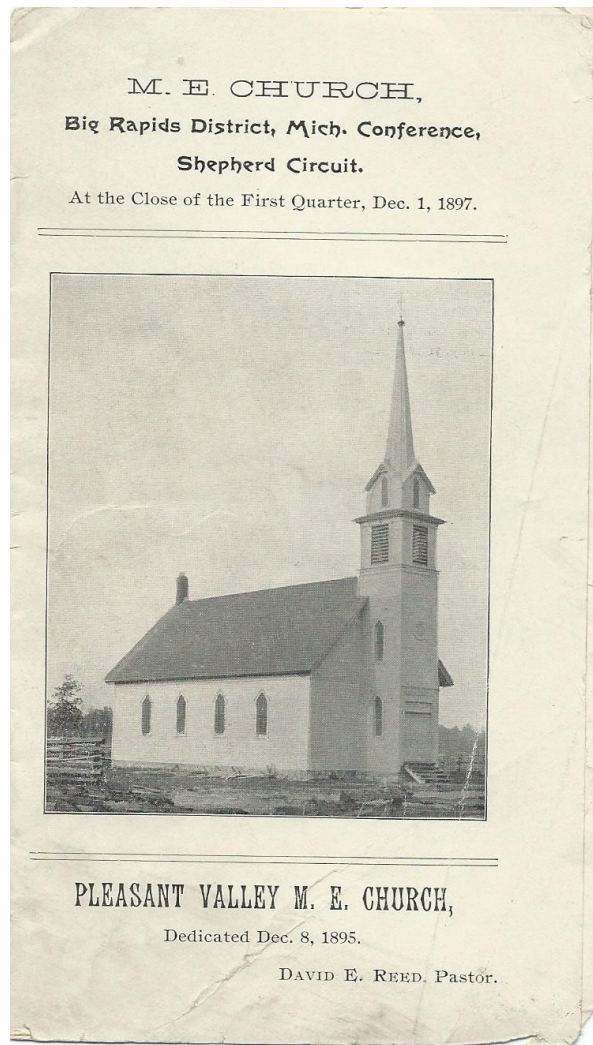
saw the construction of a new church for the Methodist Episcopal congregation in Shepherd, under the pastorate of Rev. C. W. Smith. The Church was located at 140 E. Wright Avenue.



**Methodist Episcopal Church
Salt River ~ Shepherd
Michigan
1882 ~ 1909**

In 1897, during the pastorate of Rev. David E. Reed, the west wing was added. It was called the Epworth League Room. Notice the open front horse shelter at the back of the lot.

1895



Under the leadership of Rev. D. E. Reed, the Pleasant Valley Methodist Episcopal Church was dedicated on December 8, 1895. It was part of the Shepherd Circuit of the Big Rapids District of the Michigan Conference. The Church, located on Pleasant Valley Road east of Shepherd, is now privately owned and services are held on special occasions.

1897 was the year Rev. D. E. Reed oversaw the construction of the first parsonage for the Shepherd Methodist Episcopal Church. It was (is) located on the northeast corner of 4th Street and Maple Street. In *A Brief History of the M. E. Church*,



Mrs. A. E. Clark wrote
“And just here must add, as yellow was Bro. Reeds favorite color, both Church and Parsonage were painted yellow and as we think back, many were the refreshing times, that Gods people had in the little old Yellow church.”

The home is now the private residence of Jennifer Champion and family.

1909



To replace the little yellow church, a building committee was formed and in 1909, under the leadership of Bro. Pollok, members contributed 'more money, more hard work, more plans, more patience and more faith'. A gala celebration, including dignitaries from the Masons, was held at the laying of the cornerstone. After that, bricks went up tier after tier, to the windows, and higher to the very top. Extensive plans were made for the dedication ceremony to be held December 19, 1909. *Check here next week for details of the Dedication!*

1909

OBITUARIES

Robert Harold Bates

April 13, 1909-Sept. 20, 2008

Robert Harold Bates, 99, of Shepherd passed away Saturday, Sept. 20, 2008 at the Gratiot Medical Center in Alma.

Funeral services will be Wednesday at 11 a.m. at the Shepherd United Methodist Church with the Rev. Kathy Kursch and Dr. Frank VanValin officiating. Interment will be in Salt River Cemetery.

Visitation will be today from 7 to 9 p.m. and Tuesday from 2 to 9 p.m. at the Berry Funeral Home.

Mr. Robert H. Bates was born April 13, 1909 in Champaign County near Rantoul, Ill. He was the son of Elmer and Elsie (Fultz) Bates. The family moved to a farm east of Shepherd in the spring of 1915. He was enrolled as a primer class student in Illinois and completed elementary school at the Walling School, Coe No. 7. He graduated from Shepherd High School in 1926.

Mr. Bates attended Taylor University for one year and graduated from Central State Teacher College, now CMU, with a two-year life certificate. He taught rural school (Walling) for six years with a \$1,000 per year salary. He returned to Central to complete undergraduate work, graduating in 1937 with a B.S. degree in mathematics and agriculture.

He took a position as a teacher of mathematics at the Beaverton Rural Agricultural School in the fall of 1937. After five years at Beaverton, he was drafted into the military service in October of 1942. He served as a member of Company C, 167th Regiment of the 31st Infantry Division during World War II. Following basic training, mountain and amphibious maneuvers, he served in the Southwest Pa.

cinc Theater - New Guinea, the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines. He was discharged Dec. 28, 1945.

He could have returned to the position held at Beaverton, but was offered and took the position as a teacher of math at Shepherd High School in the fall of 1946. He completed a master's degree in secondary school administration in 1949 from the University of Michigan. He served as Shepherd High School principal until his retirement in 1973.

Mr. Bates took over the family farm in 1951 and kept a meticulous garden and farm.

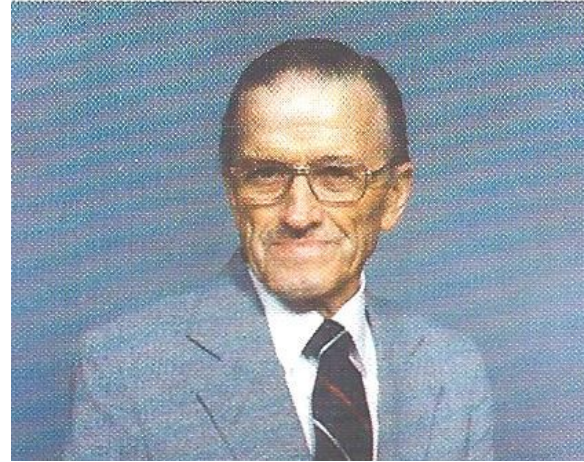
He served his community well as treasurer of the Shepherd Area Historical Society; delivered meals for Isabella County Commission on Aging; Maple Syrup Festival activities; and a volunteer at the Isabella Community Soup Kitchen.

Mr. Bates was a lifetime member of the Shepherd United Methodist Church, where he served on numerous committees and also as a Sunday School teacher for many years.

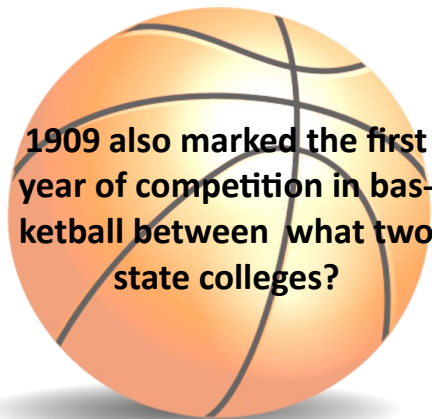
Surviving are one sister, Marvel Kerr of Caro; three nieces; one nephew; and a host of friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters, Clara Imhoff, Nellie Bates, Merle Johnson and Salo Sateri; and a niece, Joyce VanValin.

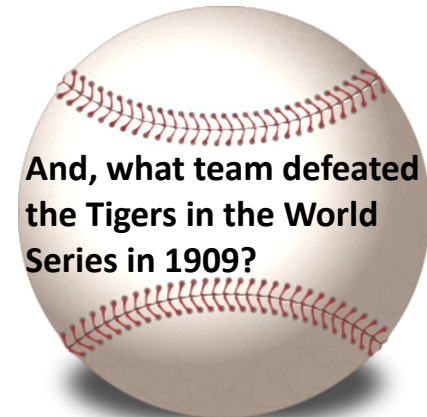
Memorials may be given to the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation (Robert H. Bates Fund), Commission on Aging, Shepherd United Methodist Church and the Isabella County Soup Kitchen.



1909 seems closer and more relevant to us when we see our friend and mentor, Mr. Bates, was born in that year.



1909 also marked the first year of competition in basketball between what two state colleges?



And, what team defeated the Tigers in the World Series in 1909?

1909

Are you going to hear Mrs. Powell sing on Dec. 19th?"

Adams

"Mr. Powell has just made his 7th trip to the Pacific Coast....

Report to the Pastor for duty NOW...

Will you be there Dedication Day— if it STORMS?...

One tenth of your time belongs to God...

We can make our Church whatsoever we will...

Forward is our watchword...

What will YOU do to continue the Great Forward Move

Souvenir Program

OF THE

DEDICATION

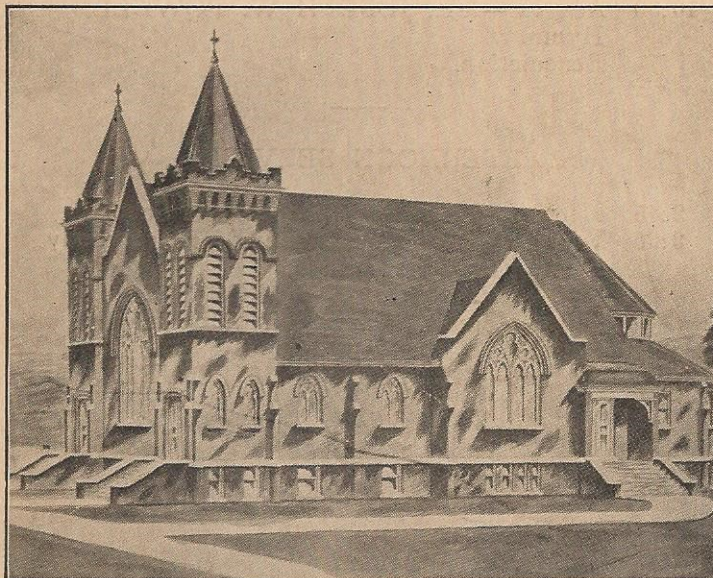
AND FORWARD MOVEMENT

RALLY DAY

OF THE

First Methodist Episcopal Church

SHEPHERD, MICHIGAN



"Blow the trumpet in Zion, gather the people,
assemble the elders, gather the children,
sanctify the congregation."

"I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Sunday, December 19, 1909

1915

“...and all felt that this Dedication Day had been a great day. Some time elapsed before everything was settled down, and we found our work had really begun.

Many had failed to pay their pledges and we had a great church debt before us. This hindered us, as people did not care to join a church with such a debt. This brought embarrassment and disappointment to our Pastors and to ourselves, sometimes the discouragements were so great, we felt the time would never come in our lives; where the burden would be cleared away, and then again cheered ourselves, by thinking that sometime in the future, as the children grew up, they could finish the task that had already begun.

But God moves in mysterious way, His wonders to perform. In 1915 Rev. C.S. Wheeler, being our DS at that time, came to our assistance, and he secured the services of Bishop Leete, also C.B. Allen of Detroit. And in their kind and winning ways they helped to raise a good share of the amount of the debt, in money and pledges with three years time. Shortly after the time was up, the pledges were paid and to the astonishment and great happiness of all we found in a period of about ten years our Church was all paid for, and we knew that God had mightily helped, and we felt to praise Him for his wonderful works to the children of God.

As Methodism always stands for a forward program and may we as a Church with God as our Leader, have FORWARD for our watchword.” *Mrs. A. E. Clark, Dec. 1920*