

# Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church

7801 Church Lane, Toano, VA 23168

Rev. Mi Sook Ahn, Pastor email: [misookahn@vaumc.org](mailto:misookahn@vaumc.org)

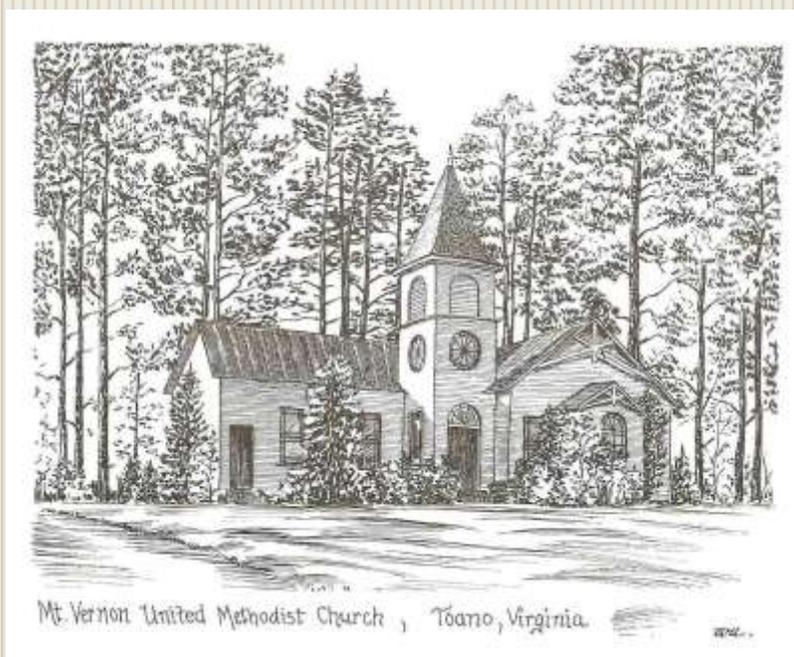
Church Office: (757) 566-0162 email: [office.mtvernon@gmail.com](mailto:office.mtvernon@gmail.com)

Website: <http://mtvernontoano.org/>



## Excerpts and Notes Taken from Transcriptions of Methodist Church Quarterly Conferences 1923 - 1952

**Transcribed by Rev. Norwood P. Montgomery  
Pastor of Mt. Vernon and Tabernacle 1966-1970**



# **Excerpts and Notes Taken from Transcriptions of Methodist Church Quarterly Conferences 1923-1952**

**Transcribed by Rev. Norwood P. Montgomery  
Pastor of Mt. Vernon and Tabernacle 1966-1970**

The following excerpts and notes were taken from a portion of the more than 400 pages of transcriptions made by Rev. Montgomery, Pastor of Mt. Vernon/Tabernacle from 1966-1970. They are just some of many transcriptions that he made over years of research. The information gathered during his research will be the basis for his telling the story of Methodism on the Virginia Peninsula from Charles City County/New Kent County to the Cities of Hampton/Newport News. While the story is one of Methodist connectionalism across the Methodist churches of the entire Peninsula, extensive resource materials in the form of Methodist Quarterly Conference Meeting Reports and other local historical documents bring focus on the faith of the people of upper-James City County and lower-New Kent County as they worshipped and served in the Methodist chapels and churches of those areas.

The title of the story is **Forever Beginning**, which represents the life of Methodism and the Methodist Church from the time of John Wesley through present day, and into the future. The story will be told by “**voices of the past**”, based on primary information sources, such as Quarterly Conference Reports and original church documents of local Circuits and Charges, combined with information from secondary sources, such as early Methodist Church histories written by well-known Methodist historians.

In addition to the general history of the Methodist Churches of the Peninsula, Rev. Montgomery’s work will provide a special presentation of the history of the James City Chapel, the people of the Chapel, and the evolution of the Chapel into two daughter churches, Mt. Vernon Methodist in Toano, and Kelton Methodist in Lightfoot. The information will reflect names, attendance records and notes handwritten in the original **James City Church Book** by the leadership of the Chapel, Quarterly Conference Reports of that time period, and other local historical information.

Because of the time period of these specific transcriptions and notes, 1923-1952, the information will be of interest to families of the people mentioned in the document. Some may remember people mentioned, while others may be descendants of them. Other readers may be people who have an abiding interest in local history and the people who lived that history.

When you get to the section for 1941-1950 time period, you will see a note that says:

**No Quarterly Conference Reports have been found for February 1, 1941 through October 1950.**

*However, while serving at Mt. Vernon/Tabernacle, Rev. Norwood Montgomery asked members of the congregations to search through their scrapbooks, old Bibles, trunks, etc., “to see what they could find for this period, as well as any other period”.*

*Rev. Montgomery has provided the information that follows along with his own notes about the time period based on items found by the members of the congregation.*

We would like to “repeat” Rev. Montgomery’s request to the readers of this document. Please “search” your scrapbooks, old Bibles, trunks, etc., to see what you can find that will contribute to the knowledge of history of the life of James City Chapel, Kelton Methodist, Mt. Vernon UMC, Tabernacle UMC, or the old Roper’s Chapel.

Of special interest are pictures of the chapels and churches in their early years, wedding pictures, membership lists, baptism and marriage records, and obituaries. If anyone has a picture or painting of the old James City Chapel, Kelton Methodist Church, or Roper’s Chapel, please contact us so that we can arrange to scan it, or take a picture of it. None have been found. We can be contacted through the church office or by email using one of the email addresses shown below.

Some of the information you have may find its way into Rev. Montgomery’s story of the local Lightfoot to Barhamsville Methodist Churches. Also, please let us know if any of the information is incorrect.

Your information can be mailed to Mt. Vernon UMC, 4801 Church Lane, Toano, VA 23168, Attention: Carole Dishman, Church Historian. Or, it can be emailed to [cjdishman@cox.net](mailto:cjdishman@cox.net) or [bobdishman@cox.net](mailto:bobdishman@cox.net)

We hope that you are blessed by the information in this document.

Carole and Bob Dishman

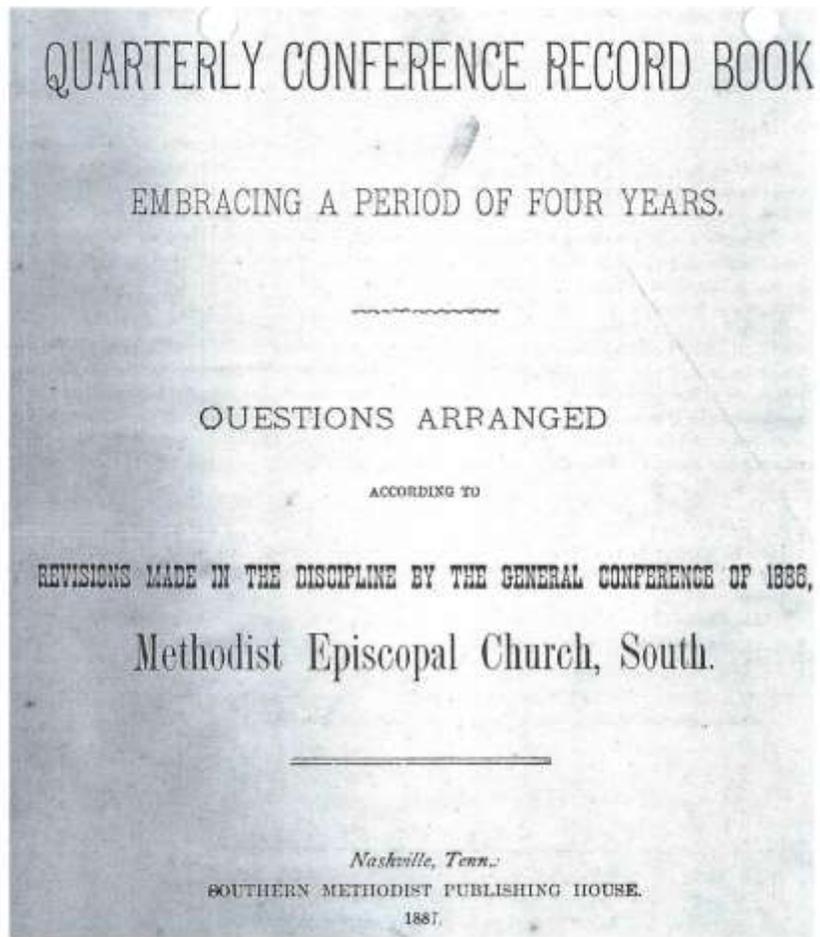
**The picture on the cover sheet is Mt. Vernon as it appeared before the 1952 Educational Building addition.**

*Family Heritage Ministry of Mt. Vernon UMC*

## About Quarterly Conferences of the Methodist Church

You will see in this document that minutes of Quarterly Conferences, or Quarterly Conference Reports as they were often called, provide us with a window in which we can view the events of the times through each report, and how those events affected the lives of the members of the chapels and churches that sent representatives to those meetings.

The minutes of each meeting were recorded in a Quarterly Conference Record Book, which was printed by the Methodist Publishing House of its time period. The Record Books were preformatted with a series of questions that had to be answered by the preacher-in-charge and the representatives of the chapels and churches in attendance. The answers to those questions were recorded in the books, along with other notes and comments that were deemed to be important. The cover shown on the right is for the Quarterly Conferences that included Mt. Vernon in years



1887-1890. Representatives of the churches attending included the stewards, trustees, and Sunday school superintendents of the chapels and churches. In the April 14, 1888 conference report, New Kent Chapel, Pamunkey, Ropers Chapel, Tabernacle, Mt. Vernon, and James City Chapel were represented.

Mt. Vernon was represented by Enoch T. Martin (trustee, steward, and Sunday school superintendent), trustees; C. P. Marston, R. G. Simmons, Cary Wilkinson, G. W. Bacon, and L. L. Martin (Exhorter).

If you are familiar with the histories of the James City Chapel, Mt. Vernon Methodist Church, and Kelton (Lightfoot) Methodist Church, it will not surprise you that both Mt. Vernon and the James City Chapel were represented at the meeting. You will remember that a major portion of the Chapel was dismantled and moved to Toano to be rebuilt as Mt. Vernon. The members of the Chapel who lived in the Lightfoot area continued to use the remaining portion of the Chapel for Sunday school and worship services. Those members, like the Toano group, built a new church, which was located at the corner of, what is now Richmond Road and Centreville Road. It was called Kelton Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Kelton began having services in 1891, and continued for 28 years. It was sold to the Baptists in 1919. The remaining portion of the Chapel was torn-down in 1891. The property remains as the James City Chapel Cemetery.

In the 1888 report, Pastor S. H. Johnson (P.C.-Preacher in Charge of the Circuit) opened the window for us, again, to see what was going on at the time, as he made some preliminary notes in the “Record” at the beginning of the meeting.

*“Dear Brothers,*

*The interest in the Sunday school work has increased with the opening of spring, and schools are in operation at James City Chapel, Tabernacle, Pamunkey, and I think at New Kent Chapel. The school at Mt. Vernon was kept up during the winter, but is now temporarily suspended because of work being done on the church building. Pastoral instruction of children has received some attention.”*

*Respectfully,  
S. H. Johnson, P.C.*

Something Pastor Johnson mentioned that we don’t even give a thought to, was his *“with the opening of spring”* comment. In those days, the country roads were often in such bad shape, that at times they were almost impossible to travel, especially in horse-drawn wagons used to transport families to church. So, many “country” churches simply closed for the winter, and began again *“with the opening of spring”*. However, he notes that Mt. Vernon continued during the winter. It was probably a bit like living in the city. The roads were probably a little better, and the church members may not have had as far to come.

Rev. Norwood Montgomery’s notes for his book, **Forever Beginning**, which will tell us about the history of the Methodist Church, with a focus on chapels and churches in lower-New Kent County and upper-James City County, describes the Quarterly Conference as *“a meeting held each quarter, led by the Presiding Elder (P.E.), with the Preacher in Charge (P.C.) and officials of the churches under his authority to hear reports on the state of the churches and Sunday schools, worship attendance, finances, and so on. Over time, Quarterly Conferences were held only three, and sometimes two times a year, though they were still called a Quarterly Conferences. Later, the terminology was changed to Charge Conference. The Preacher in Charge (P.C.) was the preacher assigned to a church or group of churches on a Circuit earlier, and to the Charge in later years. The Presiding Elder (P.E.) was in charge of the Elders (preachers) in his district. We call them District Superintendents today.”*

## **About Church Memberships as Listed in Quarterly Conference Records**

There were many instances in the Quarterly Conference Records when new members, as well as members who were lost by transfer or death, were not listed for a specific church, but were listed as a “circuit” or “Charge” membership listing. The number of churches involved in the Quarterly Conferences ranged from 2 to as many as 3-7 churches over the many years that quarterly conferences were held. **For this document, emphasis has been placed on listing members of only Mt. Vernon, as best as can be identified by records and family names.**

# Excerpts and Notes, 1923-1952

*Notes by Carole and Bob Dishman shown in “italics” are included to show family relationships to living relatives of those mentioned below, to refresh memories of people who were friends of those mentioned, or who knew of them, and to offer other information about members and events of the past that may be of interest to the reader.*

*Quotations are taken directly from the quarterly conference notes transcribed by Rev. Montgomery. He notes that he has repeated wording exactly as written in the conference reports without editing or corrections. Wording shown in parentheses within the quotation were placed only to clarify meaning of the comments made.*

## 1923, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Conference, 9/1/1923

**“We have received two (new members) this quarter by baptism, Miss Margaret Etta Fitchett, and Mildred Marston Slater.”**

*Margaret Fitchett was the half-sister of Miriam Fitchett Middleton’s father, Kendall Fitchett. Miriam Fitchett Middleton, born in 1931, grew up on Forge Road. In 2019, Miriam wrote My Memories of Mt. Vernon Methodist Church, 1930s-Forward, which describes her life and the lives of her family and friends at the church, and in the Toano community during those years.*

## 1924, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Conference, 10/9/1924

**“Three members lost, two by letters, one by death. Ann Bannister Martin died.”**

*Ann Bannister Martin (1844-1924) was the wife of Enoch T. Martin (1842-1920) of Lombardy Farm. Both are buried in James City Chapel Cemetery.*

**“A committee (of Tabernacle leaders) was called...After discussing the matter of moving, brother Creekmore made a motion to abandon the idea of moving Tabernacle Church to Barhamsville, which was seconded and carried unanimously.”**

*There had been a committee appointed at an earlier Conference to investigate moving Tabernacle to Barhamsville. Country roads in both counties were not very good in 1924, especially during rainy spells, which may have been the basis for the issue. Barhamsville was on the main road.*

## 1925, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Conference, 1/19/1925

**“New members...Mrs. H. U. Stephenson and Eleise Early Stephenson.”**

*Mrs. H.U. Stephenson was the wife of Dr. H.U. Stephenson, who built the house behind Mt. Vernon’s church and parsonage on Church Lane in 1900. The house has since been owned by the Banks,*

*Higgs, and Crawford families. The house will play a role in the Toano revitalization project. It is currently owned by Jack Wray.*

*Dr. Stephenson sold that house in 1901, and built a home on Richmond Road, which he sold to Mt. Vernon and Tabernacle in 1910 to be used as the church parsonage for Mt. Vernon and Tabernacle. By 1925, the Stephenson's may have lived above his Toano Drug Company store, or may have built elsewhere. Dr. Stephenson was a valued community leader during his time in Toano.*

*It is not known for sure, whether the Stephenson family were members of Mt. Vernon or Tabernacle. No list showing them has been found for either church. In the 2015 version of Tabernacle's history, there is a picture of Dr. Stephenson with pictures of the Davis family, and stating that Dr. Stephenson delivered all 14 children of the Davis family. The article said that Dr. Stephenson **"was well known throughout New Kent (County), West Point, and James City County"**. There is no mention that he was a member of Tabernacle.*

**"(Current) committee on Cemetery discharged with thanks of Conference. New (cemetery) committee: G. A. Marston (Sr.), Roscoe Wilkinson, and W. H. Porter."**

*The members replaced are not named here. The new members are George Archer Marston, Sr. (joined Mt. Vernon in 1895), Roscoe Wilkinson (great uncle of Nora Cottrell Abbott and her sisters, Mary Francis Aadahl and Nancy Kruse, hereinafter referred to as the "Cottrell sisters"), and W. H. Porter (grandfather of the Cottrell sisters). W. H. Porter was a pillar of Mt. Vernon for many, many years. All three men are buried in James City Chapel Cemetery.*

#### **1925, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Conference, 9/22/1925**

**"Membership: We have lost by death this quarter: Mr. G. C. Marston, and Wilson Porter."**

*G. C. Marston was George Clark Marston (1847-1925), the grandfather of Miriam Fitchett Middleton.*

*Wilson Porter (1910-1925) was the son of William Holmes (W.H.) Porter and Nora Wilkinson Porter. He was the brother of Florence Porter Cottrell, and the an uncle of the Cottrell sisters.. Wilson died tragically as a teenager in an automobile accident.*

#### **1925, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Conference, 12/14/1925**

**"It is with deep sorrow that I have to report the death of Sister Harriet (Goddin) Martin, the beloved wife of Brother Lloyd L. (Littleton) Martin."**

*Lloyd's sister was Mary Barksdale, and his brothers were Charles B. Martin and Lindley Martin. Lloyd Littleton Martin (1854-1933) was a Charter Member of Mt. Vernon (9/30/1887) and was also an Exhorter of Mt. Vernon.*

**Rev. Montgomery noted that, "This Conference was the first for Rev. Robert L. Busby as Preacher-in-Charge of the circuit".**

*Rev. Robert L. (Lee) Busby (1863-1929) was related to the family of Miriam Fitchett Middleton. She affectionately calls his son, Robert L. Busby, Jr., "Cuz Buzz", short for Cousin Busby. In 1990, Robert L. Busby, Jr. published Marstons of Virginia, 1637-1985, which is an outstanding reference for any Marston trying to understand his/her heritage.*

**“Brother E. T. Martin in expression of his interest in and devotion to Mount Vernon...provided in his last will and testament, \$60.00 per year for five (5) years. Therefore, be it resolved that a committee of five be appointed to consider and execute a suitable memorial to our deceased brother. The following were elected to the committee: Mrs. Branch Martin, Miss Lura Marston, W. H. Porter, O. B. Dryden and George A. Marston.”**

*Brother Enoch T. Martin died on June 10, 1920. He loved Mt. Vernon. Many of the Charter Members of Mt. Vernon were his children and relatives. He and his family played an instrumental role in relocating the James City Chapel building to Toano in 1886 to be dedicated as Mt. Vernon in 1887. His father, John T. Martin, joined the Chapel in 1840 and was a Class Leader of the Methodist Society that met at the Chapel. Miss Lura Marston was Miriam Fitchett Middleton's mother. Lura married Kendall Fitchett in 1926. O. B. Dryden was Miriam's uncle, and was another pillar of Mt. Vernon for many, many years. Lura Marston's family lived across the road (Forge Road) from Enoch T. Martin (Lombardy Farm).*

**“Richard Hockaday is at Massey's Business College.”**

*It is a small world. Carole and I were good friends with Richard (Dick) Hockaday and his wife, Grace, when we attended St. Marks UMC in Hampton from 1962 until 2001. Dick was a Tabernacle member and grew up near the church. Dick and Grace were fine people. In the next Quarterly Conference (5/28/1927) Tabernacle lost Dick's entire family when they transferred to Grace Methodist in Newport News. The list included: Mrs. W. P. Hockaday, Richard C., Alton P. and Clifton.*

#### **1926, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Conference, 10/2/1926**

**“Baptized the following babies...Joseph Mahlon (Cottrell), the son of M. E. (Marcus Edwards) and V. W. (Virginia W.) Cottrell”.**

*Joseph Mahlon Cottrell (1934-2002) was the father of the Cottrell sisters. He was known as “Joe” to his friends, and he had many. His name can be found in many Mt. Vernon church records during his lifetime, for he was another pillar of Mt. Vernon, and a civic leader in the Toano community. Joe's parents were Marcus Edwards Cottrell (1885-1958) and Virginia W. Cottrell (1890-1963). Joe, his wife, Florence, his parents and grandparents are in the James City Chapel Cemetery.*

#### **1927, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Conference, 9/12/1927**

**“By profession of faith, we have received (the following members) into the church...”**

**Gustavus Adolphus Goddin**

**Philip Arthur Hoar**

**Hazel Viola Hailey**

**Ella Lee Dean**

Mary Wilkinson Porter  
Hanna Elizabeth Haley  
Louise May Driscoll  
Frank Lorraine Driscoll  
Carrie Arbutus Sweeney

**By Baptism...**

John Walker Richardson  
Willis Edward Cottrell  
Louella Virginia Dean  
Emily Moir (Mohr?) Oliver  
Beulah Estelle Dean  
Francis Wyatt Cottrell  
Elsie May Richardson

*This list (based on family names) appears to be a mixed list of new members of both Mt. Vernon and Tabernacle. Many of these individuals and family names are familiar to people who grew up in the Toano area. Willis Cottrell (brother of Joseph Mahlon Cottrell) was the uncle of the Cottrell sisters. Carrie Arbutus Sweeney was the wife of George Linwood Sweeney. Carrie (1905-2009) is buried in James City Chapel Cemetery. She died at 104 years of age.*

**“On January 13, 1927, the (Mt. Vernon & Tabernacle) parsonage (on Rt. 60), in Toano, was sold for \$1800.00. Therefore, resolved that a building committee be appointed, consisting of Branch Martin, R. L. Boswell, and W. H. Porter, to take immediate steps looking to the building of a suitable parsonage for the pastor of the charge. Resolved second, that the trustees of the church and the parsonage properties be authorized to encumber...an amount not exceeding \$3500.00 for the purpose of building the parsonage...”**

*The jointly owned parsonage that Mt. Vernon and Tabernacle had purchased from Dr. Stephenson in 1910 was sold, and plans were being made to build a new parsonage on a parcel of land next to the church that was swapped with Hamner, the developer of Toano Terrace, in exchange for another parcel that jutted-out across Church Lane. It was a win-win for Hamner and the church back in 1915.*

**1928, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 3/12/1928**

**“It should be stated that Brother and Mrs. M. E. Cottrell and Brother and Mrs. M. L. Cottrell have transferred their membership from Tabernacle to Mt. Vernon.”**

*Mr. & Mrs. M. L. (Marcus L.) Cottrell were the parents of Mr. M. E. (Marcus Edwards) Cottrell. Mr. & Mrs. M. E. Cottrell were the parents of Mr. Joseph Mahlon Cottrell, the husband of Florence Porter Cottrell. Joseph and Florence were the parents of Nora Cottrell Abbott and her sisters, Mary Frances Aadahl and Nancy Kruse (the Cottrell sisters). Perhaps the transfer of church membership was the result of the Cottrell families moving to Lombardy Farm upon obtaining the property after the death of Ann Bannister Martin 1924.*

*Branch Martin became the owner of Lombardy through the Will of Enoch T. Martin, his father, upon his death in 1920. Fulfilling the desire of his father, Branch saw to the care of his mother, and probably did not desire to sell the farm until after her death.*

**“Mr. C. Perkins Marston has moved his membership to Trinity in Newport News.”**

*The Toano community lost many people as they relocated to the growing business oriented lower-peninsula communities.*

**O. B. Dryden is listed as the “Recording Secretary” for the Conference.**

*Miriam Fitchett Middleton’s “Uncle O. B.” served in so many ways. Miriam’s father died when she was eight-years old, and, according to Miriam, Uncle O. B. was always there for her.*

### **1928, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 6/9/1928**

**“Our Sunday schools are doing well. The average attendance at Mt. Vernon for the spring months has been about a hundred a Sunday. This is 25 percent better than the same time last year. Brother O. B. Dryden is our Superintendent, and the pastor has found him to be co-operative in attitude and kindly in spirit.”**

**“Margaret Fitchett is at Business College in Norfolk”.**

*Margaret was the half-sister of O. B.’s wife, Sallie Fitchett Dryden, who was the sister of Miriam’s father, Kendall Fitchett.*

### **1929, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 4/20/1929**

**“The following people have joined church this quarter...”**

**C. T. Meadows**

**Mrs. C. T Meadows**

**Owen Meadows**

**Eva Meadows**

**Earl Meadows**

**Randall Meadows**

**Tomie (Tommy?) Higgs**

**Randall Higgs**

**Frank Higgs**

**Mrs. Frank Higgs**

**Lucina Farinholt**

**Ruby McGinley**

**Harry McGinley**

**Harry McGinley**

**Oscar Wheeler**

**Alex Wheeler**

**Harvey Seal**

**Carol F. Hockaday  
George Hockaday  
Marybelle Hockaday  
Ruby Trice  
Bonnie Porter  
Lura Goddin  
Ruth Cowles  
Mildred Cottrell**

*All are familiar names to those who lived in Toano during that time, and since. Many of those names appear on cemetery stones in the James City Chapel Cemetery. This may also be a mixed list of Mt. Vernon/Tabernacle members, but the majority of the list, were members of Mt. Vernon.*

**“Mount Vernon has a membership of 149, and Tabernacle 99.”**

Rev. Montgomery stated that; *“Pastor Benny Bland was new to the charge (Mt. Vernon and Tabernacle/Pamunkey), and was the first pastor to move into the new 1929 church parsonage next to Mt. Vernon.”*

**Rev. Bland commented in the report that; “The people on the charge have received the pastor and his foster brother very generously. We are happy in our new home, and entering our new labors with joy and enthusiasm.”**

**“Committee to work plans for payment of the (new) parsonage debt...Branch Martin, O. B. Dryden, J. A. Potts, J. E. Miller, Mrs. M. L. Cottrell (President of Ladies Aid), Mrs. R. L. Boswell (President of W. M. Society), and Pastor B. B. Bland.”**

**“J. A. Potts, O. B. Dryden, and B. B. Bland were appointed as a committee to sell the property known as Ropers Church.”**

*There is little history available about Ropers Church, originally called Ropers Chapel. Most of what is known appears in the quarterly conference reports over the years. Ropers Church goes back to about 1797, and was located on what is now Barnes Road between Rt. 60 and Rt. 30. It appears that the church building deteriorated over many years, and eventually was converted by one of the quarterly conferences into an open-air “tabernacle”. The action taken during this 1929 Conference was to move forward in selling the property that was once the tabernacle.*

### **1930, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Conference, 7/20/1930**

**“The name of Brother Charles B. Martin, our much beloved and highly respected friend and Steward has been removed from the roll by death, which occurred June 30, 1930. He was one of our most faithful members and a worthy servant, not only of the church, but of Christ’s Kingdom.”**

**“Branch Martin and W. H. Porter, Executors of Charles B. Martin estate, in execution of his will, gave (on behalf of his estate) \$200.00 on parsonage debt, and \$50.00 on educational fund.”**

### 1930, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Conference, 11/3/1930

**“We are trying to organize a Junior Choir at Mt. Vernon to assist the Senior Choir in furnishing music for our worship.”**

### 1931, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Conference, 12/17/1931

**“New members received into the church are Miss Sallie Marston, and Mr. and Mrs. W. B. McKown.”**

*Mr. and Mrs. W. B. McKown were William Bryan McKown, Sr. (1896-1960) and his wife, Natalie Evans McKown (1895-1992).*

### 1932, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Conference, 9/25/1932

**“Mrs. W. H. Porter” was shown as a member of the Missionary Committee.**

### 1932, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Conference, (Date unknown)

**“Motion made by B. B. bland, seconded by Branch Martin, to instruct the grave yard committee (W. H. Porter, G. A. Marston, R. Wilkinson) to fence off, place markers, if necessary to establish line around grave yard, and report to 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Conference. Motion carried.”**

*Question...When is a cemetery not called a cemetery? Answer...When it is a church cemetery. Traditionally, church cemeteries are called “Grave Yards”. It is not known whether the instruction was actually carried out by the Grave Yard Committee in 1932. It probably did not happen. That was the second time that the same request had been made to a “grave yard committee”, but not this particular committee. The issue of not having a deed for the property probably raised its head, again. The county deeds were destroyed by fire in Richmond during the Civil War, including the James City Chapel deed. In 1952, the James City Chapel Methodist Cemetery Association was formed. The association was able to come to an agreement with the adjacent property owner, who signed a “Quit-claim” deed. A new deed and plat was obtained by the association. It is not known when the split-rail fence was placed around the cemetery. In the Norge book, Welkommen til Norge, published in 1989, there are two small pictures of the cemetery, one in 1942, and one more recent to the 1989 publication. Neither picture appears to show a fence around the cemetery. **If anyone knows when the fence was installed, please let us know.***

### 1934, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 3/18/1934

**“The following names were added to the roll (this morning)...Mrs. Thomas Higgs (and others).”**

*Mrs. Thomas Higgs was Florence Higgs (1885-1954). Florence was the wife of Thomas Franklin Higgs (1883-1971). They had a son, Randall Higgs (Sr.) who married Lucille Powers Higgs. Randall*

*(Sr.) and Lucille's children were: Randall Higgs, Jr., Mildred Louise Higgs Prosoco, Betty Lucille Higgs Palmer, and Marion V. Higgs Kozar (of Knoxville, TN).*

*The Higgs family lived in the house behind the church. Over the years, several of the church deeds show that the Higgs were very generous in providing the church with property needed for expansion. The house was originally built, as mentioned earlier, by Dr. H. U. Stephenson in 1900. He sold it to James E. Banks on June 13, 1901. The Higgs bought the home from Banks on March 30, 1943.*

*One of the recipients of this document is Betty Lucille Higgs Palmer, one of Randall (Sr.) and Lucille's children. Betty married Charles Kent Palmer (1927-2017), who served in the U. S. Merchant Marines from 1944 until 1946, when he joined the U. S. Army, serving from 1946 until 1966, retiring as a Chief Warrant Officer-3. Kent served in Germany, Korea, Labrador and Japan. He died in December of 2017 and is buried in the James City Chapel Cemetery.*

*Betty and Kent are listed in a 1951 Mt. Vernon record book as **"Sgt. and Betty Palmer"**. Kent and Betty were members of Warwick Memorial UMC in Newport News, where Betty still attends. Betty still keeps up with what is going on in Toano.*

### **1934, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 6/10/1934**

**"A committee composed of W. H. Porter, R. F. Wilkinson and G. A. Marston (Sr.) was appointed to bring recommendations to the fourth Quarterly Conference for the perpetual upkeep of the Chapel Cemetery."**

*The note in the conference records shows that there was a need being recognized for perpetual care of the cemetery. Remember that those were the days before gas powered lawn mowers were common. There may have been a few "home brewed" mowers converted with washing machine motors, but "push mowers" were the traditional device of the day. According to all records found relating to perpetual care of the cemetery, it did not actually start until the James City Chapel Methodist Cemetery Association was formed in 1952. One of the main goals of the association was to generate funding by annual membership dues to support perpetual care.*

### **1934, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Conference, 10/7/1934**

**"Financial conditions are not encouraging. This is not because of lack of liberality among our people, but due to the unfavorable market conditions of the main crop here. Though the men have sustained a heavy loss, they are making a commendable effort to bring up the salaries of the Pastor and Presiding Elder. The offering for benevolences will exceed that of last year."**

*Many church records found present a picture of just how much the church's financial condition depended on the success of crops during the earlier days of this agrarian community. Notes are plentiful about church members who were farmers helping to pay-down the debt for church buildings and parsonages, **"if the crop is good this year"**.*

**"We are in the midst of a gracious revival conducted by Miss Lillian Russel. The church has been greatly helped. We trust that several will be added to the membership."**

*Lillian Russell must have been quite an influence in her time. She even found a place in the mind of Miriam Fitchett Middleton in 2019 when she wrote and published My Memories of Mt. Vernon Methodist Church. On Page 8 of the book of her memories, she tells about Lillian Russell visiting and preaching at Mt. Vernon. At the time of the October 1934 note in the Quarterly Conference Report, Miriam was only three (3) years-old, so Miriam's recollection was not likely about that revival, but about a later event when Lillian visited Mt. Vernon again.*

*Miriam said that she remembers her aunt saying; "I never heard of any such thing...a woman in the pulpit?" Miriam said that another aunt was just as negative: "I never thought that I would see the day that a woman would be preaching in our church".*

*Miriam closed her story about Lillian Russell, by saying; "How remarkable was Lillian Russell's Christian outreach! During her ministry, she broke tradition, boldly faced criticism, and proclaimed the saving grace of God in Christ! God must be richly rewarding her now that she is in Heaven".*

**"At our September 12, 1934 meeting...the following (Sunday school) officers and teachers were elected, subject to approval by the conference."**

**"Children's Division...Supt. Mrs. A. G. Smith; Teachers: Mrs. C. B. Richardson, Miss Francie Cottrell, Littleberry Haley, Mrs. O. B. Dryden...(and others)."**

**"Young Peoples Division...Blackwell Richardson, Enoch Haley, Miss Frances B. Taylor...(and others)."**

**"Adult Division...Supt. Mrs. C. W. Richards; Teachers: Mrs. W. G. Rankin, C. B Richards, R. M Doub...(and others)."**

*Sunday school membership blossomed on the 1930's. Tabernacle reported in the next quarter that Sunday school membership had increased by 22, with a total of 101. Mt. Vernon had reported about the same number in an earlier conference report.*

#### **1934, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Conference, 12/16/1934**

**"New church members at Mt. Vernon: George A. Marston, Jr., Virginia Marston, Elsie Sweeney, Macon Sanford, Gertrude Hockaday, Mr. Lewis Armstrong and Mr. and Mrs. G. Taylor. Mrs. R. L. Boswell died."**

#### **1935, 4th Quarterly Conference, 10/4/1935**

**"The Sunday school at Tabernacle has made wonderful progress during the year. This progress continued until August when authorities closed all the churches in new Kent County. Now that the scare is over, we hope to be normal again. The same trouble was keenly felt at Mt. Vernon where there were cases of dreadful disease in the community."**

*In August 1935, Polio was running rampant across the United States. President Roosevelt cancelled the National Boy Scout Jamboree. New Kent County was one of the counties that officially enacted legislation that ordered “all group meetings or gatherings of people in New Kent (County), Virginia, as such, protracted church meetings, dances, traveling circuses, entertainments of all kinds where people congregate in groups...are hereby prohibited”. The legislation further “urged that all children under 16 years of age remain at home as long as possible for their own protection and the protection of other children in the community”.*

### **1935, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Conference, 12/8/1935**

**“We recently held a revival in each church. Twelve (new members) were received at Tabernacle and ten at Mt. Vernon. Mt. Vernon: Jean Seals, Dorothy Seals, William Rankin, Florence Porter, Jean Seals, Shirley Porter, Mary Jean Richards, Caroline Richards, Malvin (Mahlon?) Cottrell, and Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Rankins.**

*Florence Porter listed was Florence Porter Cottrell (1924-2018), the wife of Joseph Cottrell, and the mother of the Cottrell sisters. Florence was the able and dedicated historian for Mt. Vernon for many years. The church is indebted to Florence for her conscientious preservation of many important Mt. Vernon records and history notes.*

### **1936, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 7/5/1936**

**“The Women’s Missionary Society at Mt. Vernon has repaired the steeple and belfry at quite an outlay and in doing so has restored an old custom of ringing the bell on Sunday.”**

*The tradition of ringing the bell on Sunday mornings was important, not only to church members, but to the entire Toano community.*

*John E. Wray, IV, is known to his friends as “Jack”. Jack and his brother, Jeff, grew up on School Lane in Toano Terrace. Their parents were John E. Wray, III, and Mary Martin Wray. Their maternal grandparents were Walter C. and Mary Martin. Walter and Mary lived in a house in Toano Terrace, fronting on Chesapeake Avenue. The entire Toano Terrace community could hear Mt. Vernon’s church bell ring. Jack often mentions his memories of Mt. Vernon’s church bell ringing on Sunday mornings when he presents his Toano revitalization plan to groups. He has also made mention of it on Facebook, and others in the community have responded by expressing their own similar memories. Miriam Fitchett Middleton emphasized just how important Mt. Vernon’s bell was to her as she told the story in My Memories of Mt. Vernon Methodist about her and Jack Middleton ringing the bell together on their wedding day in June of 1956.*

**“...the Board of Trustees...is hereby authorized to...borrow money from the Board of Church Extensions, not exceeding the sum of \$1600 for the purpose of refinancing the (1929) parsonage debt.”**

**1937, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 6/9/1937**

**Mount Vernon Students off to college. “John Richardson is a student at Randolph Macon. Dorothy Bowers, Lura and Gus Goddin, Clyde and Enoch Hailey are at William & Mary. Ruth Cowles, Laura Crute, Hannah and Elizabeth Hailey, and Mary Porter are off to State Teachers College. Bonnie Porter is going to Richmond Business College.”**

**1937, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Conference, 12/5/1937**

**“(There was) one death. Mrs. L. C. Martin.”**

*Mrs. L. C. Martin (1862-1937) was Virginia J. Martin, the wife of Lindley C. Martin. Lindley was a Charter member of Mt. Vernon, and Virginia joined the church in April of 1888.*

**1938, 1st Quarterly Conference, 12/11/1938**

**“A supper for Stewards and wives of both churches was given by the pastor and assisted by Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Porter.”**

**1938, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 3/6/1939**

**“Lost by death...Mr. Branch Martin.”**

*Branch Martin (1875-1938) was the son of Enoch T. Martin and Ann Bannister Martin. He joined Mt. Vernon in April 1888, and is buried in the James City Chapel Cemetery.*

**“K. L. Fitchett was elected Steward for Mt. Vernon.”**

*K. L. Fitchett was Kendall L. Fitchett (1895-1939), the husband of Lura Marston Fitchett. Kendall and Lura were the parents of Miriam Fitchett Middleton and her sister, Sally. Kendall joined Mt. Vernon in 1920, and he and Lura Marston were married in 1926. He died in 1939.*

**1939, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Conference, 12/31/1939**

**“The good people of the Toano Charge have been very gracious to their new pastor.” (Rev. B. E. Hudson)”**

**“Two deaths have occurred during the quarter. Brother Kendall Fitchett, Steward of Mt. Vernon.”**

*Kendall died tragically from an aneurysm while working on the family farm, Holly Springs Farm.*

## 1940, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 3/17/1940

**“The ladies of Mt. Vernon church are considering extensive repairs of (the) church, and at Tabernacle, plans have started to put in electric lights. We have night services at Toano as well as in the morning, and are looking forward to revival services we hope to hold in April.”**

*The statement makes it clear that Mt. Vernon had electric lights (holding night services), which was probably a benefit of being “in town” near the electrical supply system. It was a long way down the little country road to get to Tabernacle, so they may have had electricity available much later than people in Toano.*

*The history of Tabernacle said that “Electricity was installed in 1940 by Lloyd Calvin Davis”.*

**“Brother George L. Sweeney, a useful citizen and member of Mt. Vernon died Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup>.”**

*George L. Sweeney (1900-1940) was George Linwood Sweeney, the husband of Carrie Arbutus Sweeney (1905-2009). Their son is Herman E. Sweeney, and their daughter is Elsie S. Pierce. George joined Mt. Vernon in 1914. Those coming to Mt. Vernon from Richmond Road pass by the George and Carrie Sweeney home right in front of us as we come to the corner of Church Lane and Chesapeake Avenue.*

---

---

## No Quarterly Conference Reports have been found for February 1, 1941 through October 1950.

*However, while serving at Mt. Vernon/Tabernacle, Rev. Norwood Montgomery asked members of the congregations to search through their scrapbooks, old Bibles, trunks, etc., “to see what they could find for this period, as well as any other period”.*

*Rev. Montgomery has provided the information that follows along with his own notes about the time period based on items found by the members of the congregation.*

*Rev. Montgomery said that; “On December 7<sup>th</sup> 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, which finally brought the United States into World War II. I do not think the war accounts for the absence of records, but we will see it’s affect as reflected in the bulletins, letters, Board Minutes, and other material of that period.”*

*Rev. Montgomery commented that: “Rev. I. L. Llewellyn became pastor in October 1941. He stayed four years, ministering through challenging and unsettling days of World War II. The bulletins and papers reveal that he had a vital ministry during a disturbing period of history.”*

*In My Memories of Mt. Vernon Methodist, Miriam Fitchett Middleton had much to say about Rev. Llewellyn and his wife, Nordia. At the age of 10, he was her favorite pastor, and apparently he was a favorite of many at Mt. Vernon. Miriam said that “He seemed to notice people’s needs, and found a way to meet them”. One of her special memories was that; “When he arrived (at Mt. Vernon) from*

*his service at Tabernacle, he immediately walked to the pulpit. Before doing anything else he always, without fail, bent down on one knee and prayed prior to meeting the congregation”.*

### **January 18, 1942 Bulletin**

**“W. S. Mauger (was listed as) Chairman, Board of Education.”**

*W. S. Mauger, known as “Stanley” to his friends, was Jack Wray’s paternal step-grandfather on his father’s side of the family. Stanley was the second marriage for Jack’s paternal grandmother, Mrs. Helen Wray Mauger, who served Mt. Vernon as its organist and choir director during the 1940s.*

### **April 26, 1942 Bulletin**

**“The Upper Room has been sent to each of our boys in the training camps. The pastor (Rev. Llewellyn) has written a personal letter to each of them.”**

### **November 20, 1942**

**“A letter dated November 20, 1942 to the congregation called for memorial gifts to the church listing what was needed and the cost:**

- **A Pulpit at \$70.00**
- **Two side pulpit chairs at \$45.00 each**
- **Two flower stands at \$24.00 each**
- **A Communion Table at \$54.00”**

### **January 10, 1943 Bulletin**

**“We rejoice in the privilege of resuming worship in our church sanctuary this morning. While the new carpet and pulpit furniture have not arrived, we thank God for what has been done. Special thanks to Mrs. Barksdale (*probably Eulalie Martin Barksdale*) and her committee for their faithful and efficient service. We also thank Brother Cowles for his good work in raising funds for painting the building and paying off the parsonage indebtedness.”**

**“We gratefully acknowledge the following Memorial gifts...”**

- **A silk Christian flag by R. M. Hazelwood**
- **A silk American flag by the sisters and brothers of the pastor**
- **A silk Bible marker by Miss Florence Price**
- **A pulpit chair by Mrs. Barksdale and her brother**
- **A Chancel Cross by the Junior Boys and Girls**
- **A Bible-stand by N. R. Martin**
- **A flower-stand by the Youth Fellowship**
- **A church sign by O. B. Dryden and the pastor**
- **A picture of Christ by Mrs. Llewellyn (Pastor’s wife)**

- A War Service Honor Roll by “a friend”

**“Donors of the Baptismal Font and two brass candle holders will be announced later”**

*The beautiful Baptismal Font stationed in the front of the sanctuary today was donated in “**Memory of Rosa Carmlette Driscoll (1874-1939)**” by her children. The Wilkinson Family Chart shows that Carmlette Wilkinson was the daughter of Eliza P. and William Wilkinson. Rosa was an aunt of Florence Cottrell and a great-aunt of the Cottrell sisters. Rosa was married to Paul Driscoll, and the couple had nine (9) children. Rosa joined Mt. Vernon in 1900, and is buried in James City Chapel Cemetery.*

*A Lectern Stand was also donated by Mrs. Helen Mauger “In Honor of John E. (John E. Wray, III), Helen Wray, and Marjorie Wray. The three were her children. The Lectern Stand, like most of the other gifts listed, is still used in the church sanctuary today.*

*Miriam Fitchett Middleton remembered that the Bible marker was given by a school teacher (Miss Florence Price) who was rooming with her mother on the family farm.*

*Mrs. Barksdale was Eulalie Martin Barksdale (1887-1975), wife of Robert N. Barksdale (1881-1940). Her brother was Hunter Mark Martin (1890-1961), a veteran of WWI. Eulalie and Hunter were children of Lindley C. and Virginia Martin.*

*The framed **War Service Honor Roll** donated by “a friend” was found recently in a storage room. It was badly damaged from bugs and is currently (2020) being researched for the names that no longer appear on the listing, and may be restored. It was an “Honor Roll” that was printed by the Methodist Church Publishing House for churches to use during WWII.*

*The men whose names can be identified in the areas of the Honor Roll that are not damaged are:*

<i>Willis Cottrell</i>	<i>Edward Cowles</i>	<i>Lt. G. A. Goddin</i>	<i>Sgt. Aubrey Griffith</i>
<i>Herbert Griffith</i>	<i>L. J. Haley</i>	<i>George Hockaday</i>	<i>Corp. Paul Kovacevich</i>
<i>J. C. Holloway</i>	<i>Harrison Goddin</i>	<i>H. Hankins, Jr.</i>	<i>Randolph Marston</i>
<i>J. Edwin Rogers</i>	<i>Alford Ware</i>	<i>Bobby Hoar</i>	<i>Ensign J. M. Jennings</i>
<i>Lt. Harry Dalton</i>	<i>Lt. W. ___lyne</i>	<i>Sgt. Alan Mauney</i>	<i>Corp. Larry McGinley,</i>
<i>Ernest McGinley</i>	<i>Thomas Martin</i>	<i>W. C. Martin, Jr.</i>	<i>Walter Treibley</i>
<i>Oliver Hockaday</i>	<i>Raymond Maustin</i>	<i>George A??rs (Ayers?)</i>	
<i>Raymond New</i>	<i>Percy McKown, Jr.</i>	<i>Roy McGinley</i>	<i>? . ? . Richardson</i>
<i>L. T. Richardson</i>	<i>Capt. C. A. Earnest</i>	<i>Enoch Haley</i>	<i>David Ware</i>
<i>Lt. R. (Richard) F. Wilkinson</i>		<i>H. P. Wilkinson</i>	<i>A. A. Williams</i>
<i>John E. Wray,(III)</i>	<i>C. Hockaday</i>	<i>Durwood Armstrong</i>	
<i>Sgt. Walter Treibley</i>		<i>Lt. C. N. Dozier.</i>	

*Along with the Honor Roll, Rev. Lewellyn asked Lura Fitchett, who was a skillful seamstress, to make a banner to honor the service men of the church. That banner has not been found. Her daughter, Miriam Fitchett Middleton, described it in **My Memories of Mt. Vernon Methodist**, as being made of red white and blue satin, with blue stars, one for each service man. It was hung by a gold cord on the south wall of the sanctuary, to the left of the alcove. (The wall next to the piano alcove in 2020) At the height of the war, the banner bore 38 stars.*

Miriam Fitchett Middleton's book, *My Memories of Mt. Vernon Methodist Church, 1930s - Forward*, can be purchased from the *Toano Historical Society*. Contact the Society through its website, <http://www.toanohistoricalsociety.org/>, or by email at: [info@toanohistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@toanohistoricalsociety.org)

**“Birthdays of Our Men in the Service...Eugene Meadows, October 9; U. G. Bradenham, October 27; Walter Martin, Jr., November 18. BE SURE TO WRITE THEM.”**

### **January 1944**

Rev. Montgomery noted that: *“In 1944 the bulletins for the first time carried the picture of Mt. Vernon Methodist Church on the front, and names of the church officials on the back. The bulletins were contributed by a church family each Sunday, recognition being given in the bulletin.” “The cost was 50 cents for each Sunday the bulletins were contributed.”*

**“Birthdays to Remember: February 4, Richard Wilkinson and John S. Mauger.”**

*These were servicemen serving during WWII. Richard Wilkinson was a highly decorated soldier and was the son of Roscoe Franklin Wilkinson (1891-1963) and Jessie Bell Wilkinson (1889-1957). Both of his parents are in the James City Chapel Cemetery.*

*John S. Mauger was the son of W. S. (Stanley) Mauger, the second husband of Mrs. Helen Wray Mauger, the organist and choir director for Mt. Vernon. Mrs. Mauger was the paternal grandmother of Jack and Jeff Wray.*

**“NAME OF THE WEEK...Alan A. Mauney...WRITE ALAN THIS WEEK.”**

*Alan A. Mauney (1924-2010) was another service man serving during WWII. Apparently, the bulletins listed a “Name of the Week” for the church members to write to during the war. In 1944, Alan would have been just 20 years of age. He was the son of Marion Mauney (1895-1962) and Dora May Mauney (1899-1992). His father, Marion, served in the U. S. Navy during World War I. The Mauney family was well-known in Toano, and almost all of the family members of those two generations are buried in the James City Chapel Cemetery.*

### **October 24, 1944**

**“Board of Stewards Meeting...Held at the home of Mrs. (Eulalie) Barksdale. Mr. Lewis Armstrong, President.”**

**“Roll Call: Mr. Booth, Mr. New, Mr. Neville (R.) Martin, Mr. (O. B.) Dryden, Mr. Lewis Armstrong, Mr. Duer, Mr. Mauger, Rev. Lewellyn. Present were two visitors, Mrs. Barksdale and Mrs. Mauger.”**

**“Report of the furnace fund was \$575 dollars available.” “The question was raised...Shall we make investigation about getting a furnace now, as it appears that there has been some inkling that the**

**priorities on such material may be lifted, especially for church organizations? It was decided to wait until later, as the quality of material will be much improved after the war.”**

**“An order was given to order one (1) ton of hard coal. If hard coal is not available, then we would have to take second choice.”**

**“The Board moved and 2<sup>nd</sup> to buy and install a new stove for the children’s Division in the Sunday School Room. The old one was condemned by the Board. Also, a grate for the present stove in the church proper was ordered and acted upon.”**

**It was agreed to try to hire a janitor to light the fires at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings and remain with them until 9:30 for \$1.00 per day. Mr. E. Braxton’s name was mentioned for this job, and will be asked to fill same.”**

Rev. Montgomery noted that: *“Mrs. Helen Wray Mauger signed the minutes as the Secretary of the Board of Stewards.”*

*We owe the finding of the minutes of this meeting to Rev. Montgomery’s request for old documents. The minutes shed a lot of light about the heating of the church before the hot-water heating system was installed, apparently after the war. Obviously, there was one pot-bellied coal stove in the main part, which Miriam Fitchett Middleton said was in the aisle where the folding chairs are currently used directly across from the Narthex entrance. (There was a church history question about whether wood or coal was used for the stove. The meeting minutes answered that question.) Also, the minutes point to the fact that steel that was required for products such as the stove was in short supply because of the need for war supplies. Also, the decision to delay the purchase because the quality of steel would be better after the war reflected on the quality of war-time consumer products. The statement about getting 2<sup>nd</sup> choice coal if hard coal was not available paints another picture. At that time, many ships of the fleet, both U. S. Navy and Merchant Marine, were powered by coal-fired boilers. Hard coal was the preferred coal for those boilers, making hard coal in short supply for other uses.*

*The stove needed for the “children’s Sunday School room, was for the area behind the “tall hinged door” mentioned by Miriam Fitchett Middleton in her “Memories” book. It was a folding wall that went floor to ceiling. Some of the brackets remain on the floor under a pew in the back of the church today. The folding wall blocked the little children meeting in the back of the church from the heat of the pot-bellied stove that heated the sanctuary. Our written church history describes walls that probably were either not insulated or poorly insulated, so a replacement for the “condemned stove” was certainly a necessity.*

*We can only wonder whether or not Mr. Braxton took the job of lighting the fires in the stoves on Sunday mornings. **Who was Mr. Braxton?***

### **November, 1944**

**“WE REGRET TO REPORT that news has been received that Walter C. Martin, Jr. has been ‘missing in action’. To his parents and family we extend our heart-felt deepest sympathy, and assurance of earnest prayer that they will soon hear good news of Walter’s survival.”**

*Walter's plane was lost during bad weather while on a mission. His parents, family, and friends held hope that he and his crew may have survived and, possibly, became prisoners of war. That was not to be. "Ju Ju", as he was called by his family and friends, was a fatality of war. He was a favorite son of Toano.*

*In the later years of his life, Tom Martin, a brother of "Ju Ju", wrote about his memories of growing up in Toano and his time of service during the war. From his notes, in 2015 Tom's son, Tim Martin, published those memories in a book, **From Toano to Germany and Back**. In 2020, Tim published an expanded 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the book, and included additional information about the account of Walter's missing in action. Included in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition are copies of the official government documents, as well as letters that Walter's mom and dad wrote to Tom telling him about his brother missing. Their son, Tom, was serving in the Mediterranean Theater of War at the same time.*

*In one of the letters, Walter, Sr., added a happier story about Tom's future brother-in-law to be. **"Johnny Wray got his wings on the 20<sup>th</sup>. (He) was home for three days. (He) left for Texas on Monday afternoon 27<sup>th</sup>. I think that he has the title of Flight Officer. Mary G. was home while he was here. They are to be married about Christmas. I will let your mother write you the details on this."***

*Mary G. was Mary Garden Martin (1926-1999), the daughter of Walter C. Martin, Sr. and Mary Garden Martin, and she was the sister of "Ju Ju", Tom, Alice and William. Johnny Wray was John E. Wray, III, who was the son of Mrs. Mauger by her first husband. She was the organist and choir director of Mt. Vernon. Johnny and Mary did marry. John became a building contractor, and in 1965, J. E. Wray and Company added the Social Hall to Mt. Vernon, which connected the Sanctuary to the Educational Building.*

*The sons of Johnny and Mary Wray, Jack and Jeff Wray, are currently sponsoring and overseeing the revitalization of Toano. Their desire is to recapture the town's character of an earlier time in history.*

*Tom Martin's book, **From Toano to Germany and Back**, can be purchased from the **Toano Historical Society**. Contact the Society through its website, <http://www.toanohistoricalsociety.org/>, or by email at: [Info@toanohistoricalsociety.org](mailto:Info@toanohistoricalsociety.org)*

### **December 3, 1944**

**"The following have been named to the Council for *The Crusade for Christ* for our church (Mt. Vernon)...C. B Duer, W. S. Mauger, O. B. Dryden, N. R. Martin, Mrs. W. G. Rankin, Mrs. C. B Slater, Mrs. O. B. Dryden, Mrs. I. L. Lewellyn, Miss Virginia Marston, and Miss Sally Ann Fitchett."**

### **December ?, 1944**

**"BIRTHDAY'S TO REMEMBER: George Hockaday and M/Sgt. Aubrey Griffith, December 24; Edward Grayson Cowles, December 29<sup>th</sup>."**

*All three were servicemen serving in the war. George W. Hockaday (1918-1970) is buried in the James City Chapel Cemetery.*

## January 21, 1945

**“BIRTHDAY’S TO REMEMBER: Roy McGinley, January 22<sup>nd</sup>; Lt. John S. Mauger and Capt. Richard Wilkinson, February 4th.”**

*All three were servicemen serving in the war. Roy McGinley (1913-1958) is buried in the James City Chapel Cemetery.*

*Captain Richard Wilkinson was the son of Roscoe and Jessie Bell Wilkinson. He served in the U. S. Army from 1942 to 1972, retiring as a Colonel. Richard was married to Margaret Walton Wilkinson for 60 Years. They had four (4) children. He was laid to rest in Hickory Neck Episcopal Church Cemetery in 2010. One of his first cousins was Florence Porter Cottrell.*

Rev. Montgomery mentioned that: **“Florence Cottrell also found a post card addressed to Mr. M. E. Cottrell, the father of her husband, Joseph M. Cottrell. It was a religious post card with a painting of the cross and the printed words, “Heed the Call of the Old Rugged Cross”. It was from Pastor Llewellyn reminding Mr. Cottrell of an important official board meeting.**

## April 21, 1946

**“The choir sang five (5) “specials” today.**

**“Mrs. K. (Kendall) L. Fitchett placed flowers in memory of her husband.”**

## May 19, 1946

**“There will not be any Preaching Service(s) at Tabernacle next Sunday afternoon due to the Baccalaureate Services at the New Kent High School at 3 o’clock.”**

**“At Toano High School the Baccalaureate Service will be held on May 26, 1946. Rev. B. B. Bland, a former pastor (of Mt. Vernon and Tabernacle in 1939) was called back to the community to preach the sermon.”**

## May 26, 1946

**“The Women’s Society of Christian Service will meet with Mrs. Lura Fitchett on June 4.”**

## 1951, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 4/8/1951

**Mt Vernon Sunday School Superintendent, W. E. Sheldon, reported that, “As in our last report our greatest need is still more room. Our building program has been slowed because of the lack of funds. We hope to remedy this in the near future. There are 101 enrolled with an average attendance of 77.”**

*W. E. Sheldon was Wesley Eugene Sheldon (1915-2005) He was the husband of Virginia Robinson Sheldon (1910-1991) who joined Mt. Vernon in 1951. She was an organist and Sunday school teacher at Mt. Vernon.*

### **1951, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Conference, 9/23/1951**

**Report from Sunday School Superintendent W. E. Sheldon stated..."Nearing completion of Sunday school rooms."**

*The Educational Building, completed in 1952, was erected behind, but not attached to, the sanctuary. The framed building housed two restrooms, six classrooms, and a tiny kitchen. Until that time no water had been available at the church. In her "**Memories**" book, Miriam Fitchett Middleton expressed the importance of that new feature. **"In 1952 the Educational Building was erected next to the church...with running water! And, restrooms! For sixty-five years, Mt. Vernon had done without those luxuries!!** Note the exclamation points that she used.*

### **1951, 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Conference, 12/9/1951**

**"We have lost two members through death this quarter...George Archer Marston (Sr.), former steward and long-time member, and George Sweeney, a former steward."**

*George Archer Marston was George Archer Marston, Sr. (1884-1951), the son of George Clark Marston and Miriam Virginia Marston. George Clark Marston and his son, George Archer Marston (Sr.) joined Mt. Vernon in 1895, and Miriam Virginia Marston joined Mt. Vernon in 1896.*

**"We now have a prospect list of twelve (12) for membership in the church...Mr. & Mrs. S. G. Sheldon, Mr. and Mrs. Pete (Sidney Elmo & Roxie) Sheldon, Mr. and Mrs. Billy McKown, Mr. and Mrs. Thrall, Mr. and Mrs. Earman, and Mr. and Mrs. Young."**

**"Our Sunday school building is nearly complete, and has been in use for some time. Sunday school enrollment and attendance has increased since the construction of the new building, and it will be necessary in the near future to add additional rooms..."**

**"The church parking and picnic grounds will require much work and some little cost. Parking upon the road is unlawful and is not being encouraged."**

*Additional parking space became available in January 1963 when A. B. Smith and his wife, Edwina, donated the parcel that became the "upper-level" parking lot in use today. It was Lot #27 of the original Toano Terrace development, and was the only Toano Terrace lot on the west side of Church Lane. The Smiths lived across the street. Pete Sheldon remembered that Smith had a horse pen on that property.*

**"Our active membership is 83. Our inactive membership is 12."**

**1952, 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Conference, 6/22/1952**

**“New members...W. J. B. Moore, Robert Timberlake, Robert Walls, Mrs. Robert Walls, Otis Timberlake, Mrs. Otis Timberlake, Gayle K. Norwood, Dorothy Martin, Virginia R. Moyer, June Whitacre, Peggy Boughton, Mr. and Mrs. Pete (Sidney Elmo & Roxie) Sheldon, S. G. (Sidney Gaylord) Sheldon, and Mrs. S. G. (Ada Rudd) Sheldon.”**

**Rev. Montgomery noted that; “Mt. Vernon’s Treasurer’s Report was signed by J (John) E. Wray (III)”.**

**Rev. Montgomery noted that within the collection of documents found by the members: “A mimeographed letter was found among various papers which shed some light on the James City Chapel Methodist Cemetery Association...”**

**It said; “On April 2, 1952, a meeting was held at Mt. Vernon Methodist Church, Toano, to organize an association for the upkeep, beautification, and enlargement of the James City Chapel Cemetery, at Norge, Virginia, with the goal of placing it under perpetual care and establishing a fund whereby this purpose could be assured.”**

*The association was successfully formed in 1952, a quit-claim deed was agreed to by the adjacent land owner to establish the cemetery boundaries, and a perpetual care fund was established. The organization was well run, with clear and precise documentation and records. By 2012, the last active officer of the association had passed, as well as most of the original members. A church cemetery committee was established to carry on the work of the association, and it did that work until 2019, when the James City Chapel Cemetery Association was legally re-established as a non-profit corporation. The cemetery is owned by Mt. Vernon U.M.C. The Cemetery Association manages and operates the cemetery with oversight by the Board of Trustees of the Church, and under the authority of the Administrative Council of the Church.*