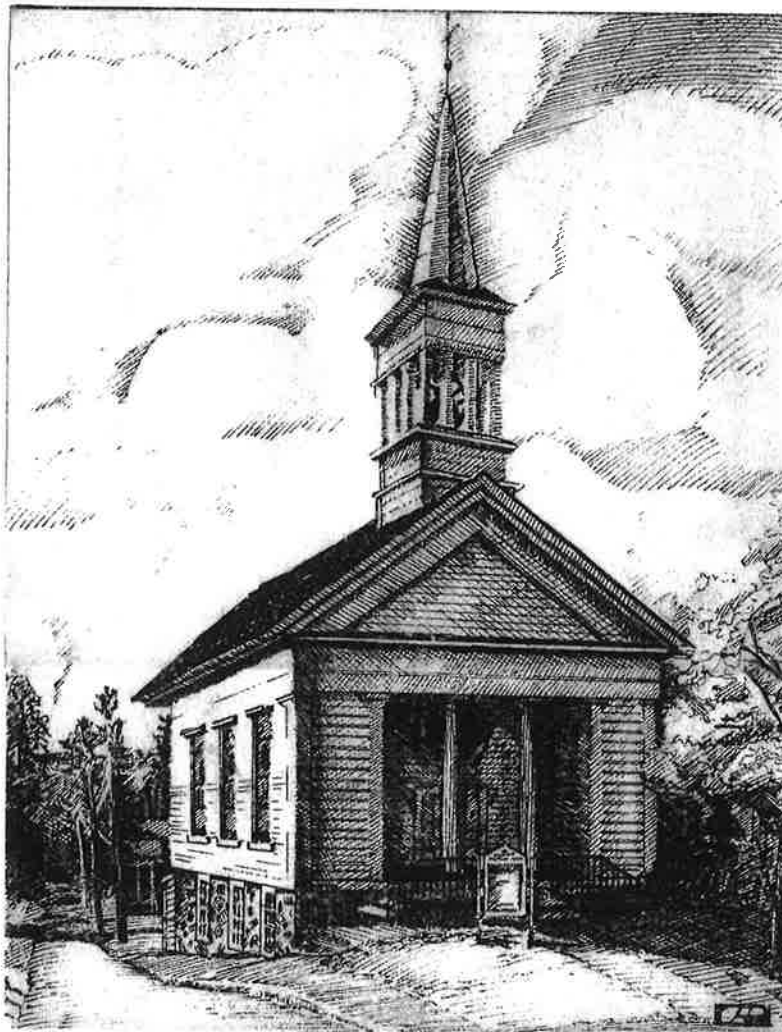
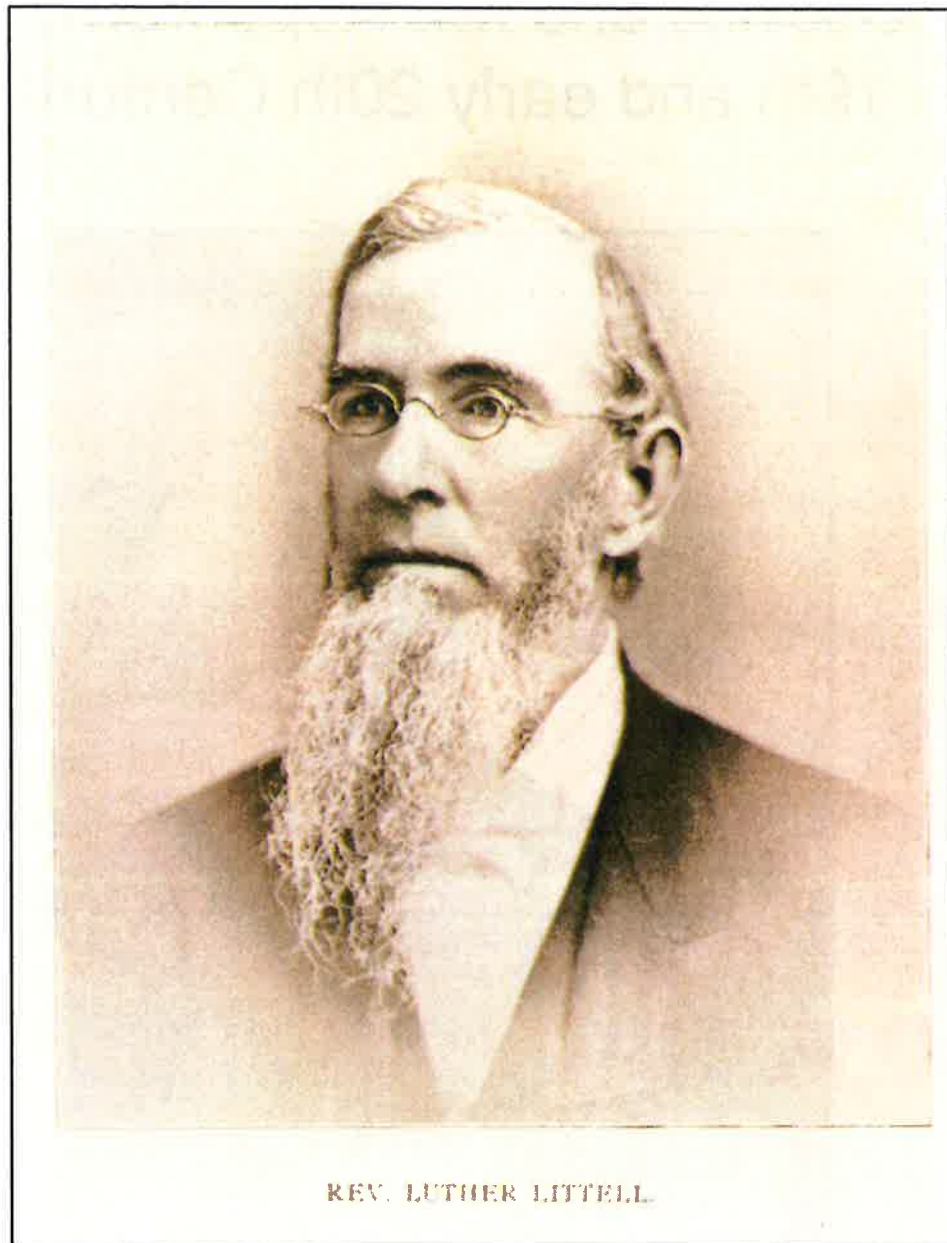


Historical documents of the First Presbyterian Churches of Otisville and Mt. Hope from the 19th and early 20th Centuries



Rev. Luther Littell
Brief histories of Two Churches
Mt. Hope Presbyterian Church
Otisville Presbyterian Church



Portrait and Biographical Record of Orange County, New York.
Chapman Publishing Company, The University of Wisconsin,
Madison. 1895, p 638.

Church history by Rev. Luther Littell, pastor

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MOUNT HOPE

had its origin in the last century. On March 25, 1770, Oliver Delancy, Esq., of the city of New York, executed a deed or perpetual lease, conveying to Messrs. W. Gillett, David Smith, and Simeon Marsh fifty acres of land lying in the town of Deerpark, to be held in trust for the use of a Protestant minister, "who must be elected and chosen by the tenants and freeholders for the time being residing in said town, to do divine service and preach the word of God among them." March 2, 1771, David Johnston, Esq., also of New York, executed a deed, conveying to the same persons in trust, for the same purpose and on the same terms, twenty-five acres of land lying next to the previous lot. This land lay near the locality long known as Otis' Factory. There was at that time no regular Presbyterian Church in the town of Deerpark. Two congregations, however, assembled regularly for religious worship. One was of the Baptist communion, and was served by Rev. Eleazer West. The other held services and had occasional preaching at the house of Elijah Reeve, a large stone house near Otis' Factory, recently removed. After the close of the war of the Revolution a law was passed by the Legislature of New York, April 20, 1784, enabling congregations to incorporate. In accordance with this, Feb. 9, 1785, the congregation worshipping at the house of Elijah Reeve met, and were regularly incorporated by the election of the following six trustees, viz.: David Smith, Sr., Joshua Corwin, Sr., Joseph Smith, John Ketcham, William Shaw, William Rose. They assumed the corporate name of "The Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church in Deerpark." Steps were at once taken to secure possession of the land conveyed by the deeds of Messrs. Delancy and Johnston. It was occupied by Mr. West. But as the Baptists had failed to secure an organization, after some arbitration and the payment to Mr. West of ten pounds as remuneration for improvements made by him, the land was yielded to the trustees of the organized body. A portion of it was used for a time as a place of burial, but no building was erected thereon. After this, upon application by Messrs. Thomas White and Wm. Shaw, Lewis A. Scott, Esq., of New York, gave the *promise* of a deed for five acres of land on "The Plains," near the present village of Otisville, for the erection of a house of worship and other church purposes. The deed for this land was given ten years afterwards, in March, 1795, by the executors of Mr. Scott, and conveyed a clear title to the trustees of the church. A portion of the lot had in the mean time been fenced in and used as a place for burial, and the whole of it is now used for that purpose, and known as the "Mount Hope Cemetery."

It was not, however, till 1791 that a house of worship was erected on this land. It was built under a subscription-paper headed "For a Presbyterian Congregational Meeting-house." The house was not finished for several years. This building was a very plain structure, about fifty feet square, with lofty pulpit and high-backed seats, and without paint. It was used for purposes of worship more than forty years, until about 1835, when it was removed from the ground and put to other uses.

In the mean time there had been large removal of Presbyterians to Mount Hope, mostly from Long Island. Rev. Mr. Kerr, of Goshen, preached occasionally for the congregation. The church as yet, so far as is known, had only a *civil* existence. Just when its first board of elders was elected is not known, as the first book of records of Session cannot be found. The question of the ecclesiastical connection of the church was settled Sept. 3, 1792, when by a large majority of votes the congregation resolved to join the Presbytery of New York. A considerable

Mt. Hope Presbyterian Church, 1835 to 1933
(The building was later sold to Otisville Grange.
It was destroyed in a fire in 1948)



The First Presbyterian Church of Montgomery (1831) is of the same design as the church in Mt. Hope (1835)



Photos --Sept. 2020



portion of the people had a strong preference for Morristown Presbytery or Platform, the latter body being an association chiefly of Congregationalists. It is probable that about this time the first elders were elected, William Shaw, William Rose. The matters disposed of, the congregation, April 1, 1793, made a "call" upon Rev. Jonathan Freeman, then of Hopewell, to become their pastor for one-third of his time. Mr. Freeman accepted, and was installed the first pastor of the church, Aug. 29, 1793, by a committee of the Presbytery of New York, consisting of Revs. Kerr, Close, and King, and Elder Reuben Hopkins. His pastorate was not successful. Contending elements existed in the church. The Congregationalists had become a well-defined party and claimed the property. Appeal was made to the courts, which confirmed the title in the trustees of the Presbyterian Church, after which the Congregational element drew off and formed the church now worshiping at Howell's. * (*This conflicts somewhat with the account of the Howell's Church, which is drawn direct from their ancient book. We leave both that the facts may appear by comparison.) The pastoral relation of Mr. Freeman was dissolved by Presbytery April 19, 1797.

In 1801 the Rev. Mr. Baldwin, for many years the pastor of the church at Scotchtown, served the Mount Hope Church a part of his time. June 10, 1803, Rev. Benjamin Prime became pastor of the church, preaching three-fourths of his time. After several years the relation was dissolved. Mr. Prime resided in the community until his death, June 26, 1823.

During this period the church languished, having only 17 members. Three persons were now elected to the eldership, who served the church long and faithfully in that office. They were Alexander Bodle, Marshal Stigney, and John Boyd. But a brighter day was now to dawn upon the hitherto struggling church. Oct. 2, 1816, Rev. William Blain was installed its pastor. He preached also a part of his time at Ridgebury. Mr. Blain was the first student who entered the theological seminary at Princeton. Under his effective ministry the church enjoyed its first revival of religion, resulting in large additions to the membership. After six years of successful labor, in 1822, Mr. Blain accepted a call to the church in Middletown. When he left the Mount Hope Church it was united and strong, with a membership of 117. Four elders were added to the Session during his pastorate, viz.: Joshua Penny, William S. Little, David Swezey, and Abijah Norris. Mr. Blain was a man of high character as a preacher and pastor, and after leaving Middletown was for many years pastor of the ancient church of Goodwill. During the two years following Mr. Blain's removal, Rev. Thomas Grier, of Westtown, acted as stated supply for one-half his time.

In 1824, Rev. Edwin Downer, a young man from New Jersey, became pastor. He remained four years, in which time there were 17 additions to the church. Failing health compelled him to relinquish the charge Oct. 22, 1828. He continued to reside many years in the bounds of the congregation, but at length removed to Westfield, N. J., his native place. He died May 31, 1868 in the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church of that place, just as he was commencing service. Following him, for a short time, Rev. James Russel acted as stated supply, but declined to become the pastor.

In 1829, Rev. Sylvester Swezey became stated supply of the church. By his efforts the Congregational Church, which years since had gone out from the congregation, were induced to unite with them in support of one pastor. The two congregations worshipped together, as Mr. Swezey preached alternately in the church on the "Plains" and the building of the Congregationalists, long known as the "Yellow Church" near the village of Mount

Hope. The union seems to have been a happy one, and during this time the church enjoyed its second revival of religion, resulting in the addition of 57 persons to its communion. this union ceased when Mr. Swezey left, in the spring of 1833. He was soon succeeded by Rev. Andrew Thompson, who had been serving the churches of Nyack and Greenbush, in Rockland County. As early as 1811 the tract of 75 acres deeded to the church by Messrs. Delancy and Johnson was sold, under an order granted by the chancellor of the State, and the money placed at interest. With these funds a parsonage was purchased in the spring of 1833, consisting of a house and 25 acres of land, lying near the village of Mount Hope. This as first occupied by Mr. Thompson. With his coming the subject of the erection of a new house of worship was discussed. The village of Mount Hope had now grown to be a thriving place of considerable business importance, and here the congregation decided, not without strong opposition, to erect its new building. It was a neat edifice, 70 by 45 feet, with spire, and sittings for over 400 people, built at a cost of \$4000. The building was the exact counterpart of the then new house of worship at Montgomery, in this county. It was finished and dedicated early in 1835, when the old church on the Plains was abandoned. After a successful pastorate of five years Mr. Thompson died, Feb. 27, 1838, and was buried upon the Plains. He was a man of thorough culture and high character as a preacher, and left his impress upon both the church and the community. He was the father of A. P. Thompson, now of Port Jervis.

He was succeeded by Rev. W. G. Johnston, a Scotchman, who was installed pastor in 1839. He remained about two years. For two years following there was no pastor, until May 8, 1842, when Rev. Edward B. Edgar, who had accepted a call, was installed. Under his labors the church assumed a higher position. Regular contributions to the great missionary enterprises were commenced; the interests of the Sabbath-school were advanced; the church grew stronger in piety and influence. Thirty-six persons were added to the membership during his pastorate of eight years. Amid the general regrets of the people, Mr. Edgar left early in 1850 to become pastor of the church in Westfield, N. J., where for twenty-two years he labored successfully. He is now living without charge at Plainfield, N. J.

His immediate successor was the present pastor, Rev. Luther Littell, who came to the congregation a young man, direct from the theological seminary at Princeton. He was ordained and installed pastor of the church by the Presbytery of Hudson, Sept. 26, 1850. During the thirty years of this pastorate there have been five seasons of special religious interest, resulting in additions to the church varying from 10 to 60 persons. The Sabbath-school grew to more than double its former number, and the yearly contributions to religious and benevolent objects were much increased. In these years, at various times, the congregation has expended over \$1500 in renovating their house of worship. On May 2, 1864, by act of the Legislature, the corporate name of the church was changed from the "First Presbyterian Church of Deerpark" to the "First Presbyterian Church of Mount Hope." Such change seemed desirable, as, by changes in the towns, the church had long been miles away from the boundaries of the town of Deerpark. Also, in the spring of 1867, by order of the court, the recent parsonage premises were sold, and a more convenient and spacious house, with four acres of land, lying near the church in the village, was purchased at an additional cost to the congregation of \$1000. During this period of thirty years there have been 229 additions to the church. But, as in all our rural churches during these years, there has been a heavy drain upon the membership of this church by death and removal of families to railway villages, so that the membership of 160 a few years since has now declined to 120. During the last two pastorates the following

persons were chosen to the eldership, viz.; John K. Davis, Barna Horton, Robert Thorn, Joshua Corwin, Daniel T. Boyd, A. W. Mapes, J. W. Canfield. Some of these persons are deceased, others have removed to other churches. At present the officers are as follows; Pastor, Rev. Luther Littell; Elder, John K. Davis, Daniel T. Boyd, Alsop W. Mapes; Trustees, Charles Mapes, John Borland, Danl. T. Boyd, Theodore Moore, Isaac E. Ketcham.*

• Upon the church history given above it should be remarked that the pastor appears to trace the same church organization that is given the part in the account of Howell's Congregation Church. (See Wallkill.) It seems that both claim the same origin, and that each is the legitimate successor of the one church of 1782. The old book, still preserved at Howell's, bears unmistakable evidence that the organization was Congregational at the outset, though it might have been somewhat Presbyterianized at a later period. There seems no better way than to let the two accounts stand as they are prepared. If they are in any respect conflicting that very fact may lead both to the exact truth in the case.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF OTISVILLE

effected a legal organization June 27, 1855. The proceedings were signed by Daniel G. Beyea and Benjamin W. Dunning. The trustees named in the certificate were William A. Gerow, A. Sidney Dodge, Dr. Avery Cook, John Mulock, James McBride, Daniel G. Beyea, and John N. Dunning.

The church was organized March 24, 1855, by a committee of the Presbytery of Hudson, consisting of Messrs. Daniel T. Wood, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Middletown; O. M. Johnston, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Denton; and Augustus Seward, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Port Jervis, together with George M. Newman and Moses Sawyer, elders in the Denton Church. The following persons united with the church at its organization, namely: Mrs. Pamela Cook, wife of Dr. Cook; Sarah Ann Dodge, wife of A. S. Dodge, Esq.; Mrs. Kezia Dunning, wife of B. W. Dunning, Esq., Mrs. Sophia Gerow, wife of Wm. A. Gerow, Esq., Esther E. McBride, wife of James McBride, Esq.; Mrs. Frances Loomis, wife of Ephraim O. Loomis, Esq.; Mrs. Charlotte Beyea, wife of Daniel G. Beyea, Esq., who presented letters of their membership in good standing in the Methodist Episcopal Church of the place, together with Benjamin W. Dunning, who made profession of faith. These eight persons constituted the First Presbyterian Church in Otisville.

The first elder elected was Benjamin W. Dunning.

On April 18th following the church was taken under the care of the Presbytery of Hudson.

A suitable house of worship was erected at a cost of over \$5000, on a lot given for the purpose by Ephraim S. Loomis, Esq., on the west corner of Orchard and Main Streets. The building was completed Sept. 24, 1856, was dedicated to God for public worship.

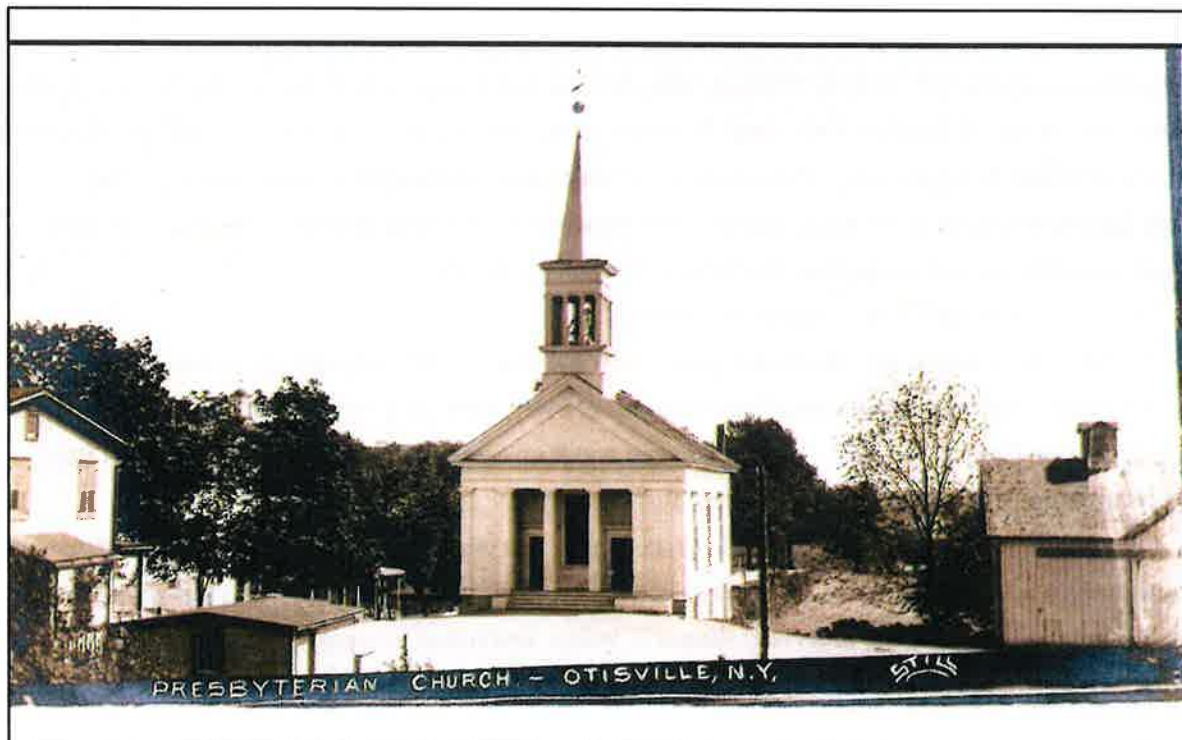
The congregation had much to contend with during the first years of its history. A heavy debt rested upon it, the membership was small, it had no pastor to feed the flock, yet it increased steadily, and bravely met every discouragement until March, 1858, when Rev. Moses H. Wilder was invited to supply the pulpit for one year. During the next twelve months the Rev. Wm. W. Page supplied the pulpit also with ability. In December, 1862, the Rev. Wm. R. S. Belts accepted a call to become the pastor of the church; this office he discharged faithfully for

three years, resigning April 18, 1865. Two years afterwards Rev. F. W. Farries was invited to preach as a supply for one year, at the end of which time he was called to be the pastor, which relationship continued until Feb. 1, 1871, when the pastoral relation was dissolved amid much regret of the congregation. Rev. R. H. Craig was then called to the pastorate of the church, May 1, 1871, which relationship is still maintained by an affectionate people and a devoted pastor. A debt of \$1500 resting on the church building was liquidated Jan. 1, 1870, and in 1874 the laudable enterprise of erecting a parsonage was entered upon with much zeal by the congregation. It was completed at a cost of \$3000, and occupied in the following year, but with a debt of \$1200 remaining. At the twenty-fifth anniversary of the organization of the church this debt was all paid, the entire congregation subscribing liberally, even the children of the Sabbath-school being glad to take a part in the work.

Among the good friends of the church who have passed away stood the late Ephraim S. Loomis, Wm. A Gerow, and S. A. Dodge.

The elders of the church at present are J. K. Austing, D. G. Beyea, A. L. Corwin, H. Willis, G. Beebe, and S. N. Gerow.

Two revivals of religion have taken place during the history of the church, one under the pastorate of Rev. F. W. Farries, in connection with the efforts of the evangelist, Mr. Parker, when about thirty persons united, chiefly on profession of faith; and the other in 1876, when the present pastor, Rev. R. H. Craig, received thirty-nine, nearly all on profession of faith. A prosperous Sabbath-school is maintained in the church, taught by devoted teachers; the society is free of debt; the people are united; and altogether there is much to be hoped for in regard to the Presbyterian Church of Otisville.



A biographical sketch: Rev. Luther Littell, Mt. Hope Presbyterian Church

Rev. Luther Littell, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Mt. Hope, was born April 21, 1824, at New Providence, N. J., and is the seventh in the family of ten children born to John and Mary (Conkling) Littell. His father was also a native of New Providence where he was reared, and where for many years he was engaged in the mercantile business. He was also a surveyor, and did a great deal of work in that line in his native county. He was quite a literary man, and in his political views was originally a Whig, but afterward became a Republican. In political matters he always took an active interest, and for about forty years was Justice of the Peace. He also served his county in the Legislature for two terms. In the Presbyterian Church, of which he was a member, he served as Elder for many years, always taking a great interest in religious affairs. His death occurred when he was seventy-five years of age. His parents were also natives of New Jersey, and the family history dates back to Anthony Littell, who came from near London, England, to this country about 1700. Our subject had an uncle, a brother of his father, who was a Colonel in the War of 1812, and for whom our subject was named.

Mary Conkling, the mother of our subject was born in Basking Ridge, N. J., and her death occurred at the age of eighty-seven years. She was an active member of the Presbyterian Church, and always had at heart the interest of her Master's cause. Notwithstanding her extreme age, she was a well preserved woman up to the time of her death. Her family history dates back to the time when Amos Conkling came from England, in 1642s, and settled in Massachusetts. (See the Littell Genealogy, prepared by John Littell in 1852.)

When our subject was about ten years of age his parents sent him to a boarding-school at Plainfield, N. J., later to Bloomfield for one year, thence to Madison, that state, where he pursued his studies until seventeen years of age, and then entered Princeton College, from which he graduated in 1844, when twenty years old. Soon after graduating

he began teaching in Westfield (N. J.) Academy, where he remained one year, then went to Rising Sun, Md., where he remained two years, teaching in a select boarding-school. At the expiration of this time he entered the Princeton Theological Seminary, where he graduated in 1850. Later he came to Mt. Hope, where he was ordained to the ministry, and was pastor of the church until 1881. A call was then received from the Presbyterian Church at Holt, Mich., which he accepted, and where he served as pastor for three years. Later he went to Morrice, in the same state, where he remained five years. When he was called to Michigan he had served as pastor of the Mt. Hope Church for thirty-one years. After being away about ten years, he was persuaded by some of the old members to return and again take up the work at this place. During his absence the case had in a measure declined, and it became necessary that some one should take hold of the work and build the church up again.

On the 3rd of May, 1853, Mr. Littell was united in marriage with Miss Mary Ann Hall, of Penn Yan, Yates County, N. Y., and to them were born three children all of whom have passed to the better world. Charles H. died at the age of twenty-three years one week after his graduation from Princeton College; Frank Hall died at the age of fourteen years; and Anna M. died in infancy.

In his political views Mr. Littell is a staunch [sic] Republican, and take quite an active part in local politics. But it is to the ministry that his talents are given. For nearly a half-century he has been proclaiming the Gospel of the Son of God, and the good that he has done and the souls that he has saved will never be known until eternity.

Source: Portrait and Biographical Record of Orange County, Chapman Publishing Co. 1895. pp 639-640

Note: Find obituary for Rev. Littell in Middletown Daily Press, Dec. 29, 1899.

Subject: Otisville and its Environs

Presented to Middletown and
Wallkill Precinct Historical Society
after Delivery on Apr. 3, 25

by Rev. E. Frank Fowler D. D.

[Excerpted]

Religious Services

The first preaching service held in this vicinity was in 1780 by the Reverend Amzi Lewis who came from Florida, N.Y. He was a member of the Morris Presbytery of New Jersey, at long intervals preaching services were held until 1787 when all record of them ceases until 1791 when the Shawangunk and Deerpark church was built at about the center of the front of the Plain's Cemetery. * From June to September in 1792 it was served by Metheusala H. Baldwin and Johnathan Freeman both of whom were Licentiates.

In the latter part of 1792 the name of the church was changed to the Deerpark Presbyterian church, being so organized by one Rev. Kerr of Goshen, N. Y.

Johnathan Freeman was installed on August 28, 1792 at Hopewell, N.Y. and the next day he was installed as pastor of the Deerpark Presbyterian church which he served for five years.

Benjamin Prime was installed as pastor in June 1803 and served until April 1807.

William Blain was installed October 2nd, 1816 and served until 1822.

Shortly after this the church as a corporate body was allowed to go out of existence and the building went into decay. Before it was abandoned its name had been changed from the Deerpark Presbyterian church to the Deerpark Four Corners church, what remained of the old church was torn down in 1833 and the timbers in the frame were used to make the frame of the barn on the Andrew Mitchell farm now occupied by his son Joseph Mitchell. (24—30 Mt. Hope Ave)

The village of Mount Hope at this time had become the second largest town in this section and the people there who were formerly connected with the Deerpark Four Corners church came together and started a new society, others joined them. They erected a church at Mt. Hope which remains to this day.

In 1847 Otisville was an appointment in the New York Conference of the Methodist Episcopal church the society consisting of a class of twenty five members and was under the care of the Rome and Wantage circuit over which Rev. Richard Van Horn was Pastor and the Rev. C.E. Hill was the junior preacher. Services had been held for a number of years but in 1847 they organized into a church, electing trustees and at a subsequent meeting decided to build a church, which they began that same year. It was to be thirty four by sixty eight feet and to cost nineteen hundred dollars. It was completed on Dec. 24th, 1848 and soon after dedicated. At the New York Conference of 1848 Otisville was set off and placed in the territory of the New Jersey Conference where it remained until the spring of 1857 when it became an appointment in the Newark Conference where it still remains. (18 Highland Ave.)

There was no Presbyterian society in Otisville from 1833 to 1854 when in the month of April the following persons met together and formed the First Presbyterian church of Otisville and were taken under the care of the Hudson Presbytery.

Mrs. Pamela Cook wife of Dr. Avery Cook.
Mrs. Sarah Ann Dodge wife of A. S. Dodge.
Mrs. Kesiah Dunning wife of B. W. Dunning.
Mrs. Sophie Gerow wife of Wm. A. Gerow.
Mrs. Frances Loomis wife of Ephriam S. Loomis.
Mrs. Esther E. McBride wife of James McBride.

* 23 Mount Hope Road

Mrs. Charlotte Beyea wife of Daniel Beyea.
Benjamin W. Dunning

These seven heroic women and this one lone brave man thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah the fourth chapter and the first verse which says "Seven women shall take hold of one man", they interested others in the enterprise and a building project was started on the spot where the church now stands.* A high hill had to be taken down and the building of a church began which was completed on September 24th, 1856.

The first preacher of the newly formed Presbyterian church was the Rev. T.D. Wood, the first preacher called by this young church was the Rev. A.D. Peloubet, in December 1862 the first pastor to be installed was the Rev. W. R.S. Betts.

The Little Red Schoolhouse soon came, the first one being located down on the Plain's south of the First Presbyterian church of Deerpark on the spot where the Wiggins lot is now situated in the Cemetery. No record of the teachers of this school has been left. (25 Mt. Hope Ave. Plains Cemetery)

Later came the District school located on the old road from Otisville to Middletown, it stood below the Cadwell crossing about four hundred feet on the left side of the road. Its first teacher was Helen Jane Cadwell, she was followed by B.F. Hill who was one of the most popular teachers in the county. (33 Kelly Hill Road) .

In the midst of his greatest success he suddenly died Sept. 29, 1870 and he was held in

such high esteem that the teachers and scholars of Orange County erected a fine Monument to his memory, at the head of his grave where it stands today in the Plain's Cemetery. The third teacher was the wife of B.F. Hill.

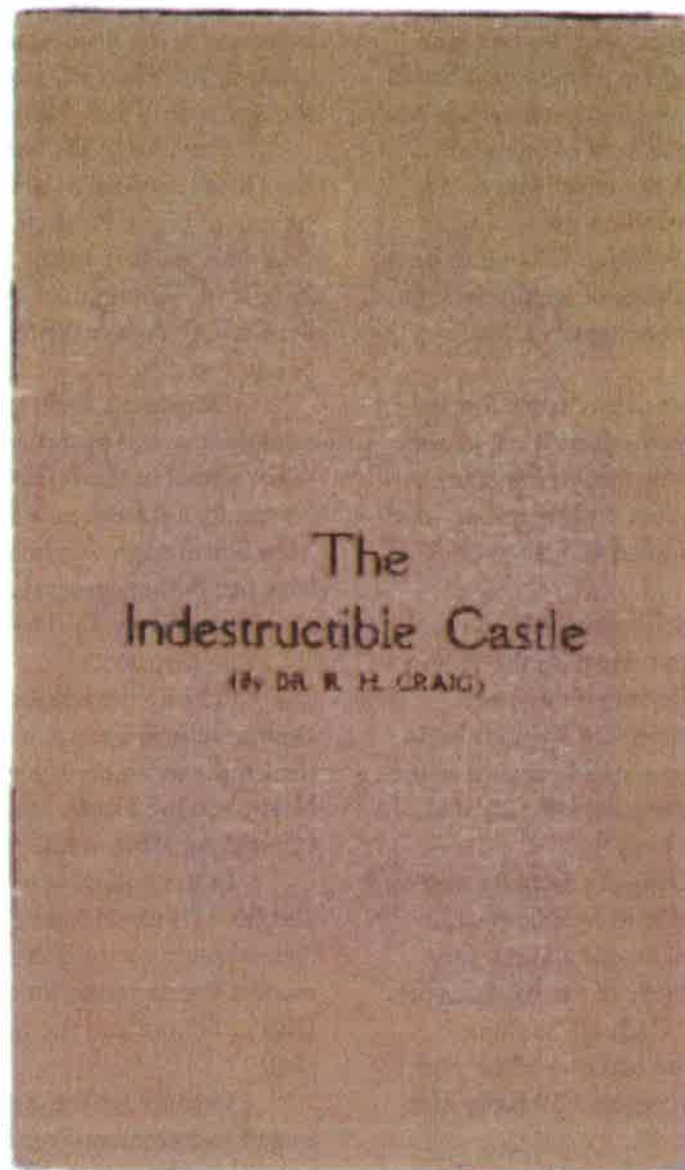
Previous to the building of this schoolhouse the District School as it was called was held in the basement of the Presbyterian church for three years the teachers being H. Poorhouse, Harrison King and a young man by the name of Green who lived where Aaron Writer Jr. now lives. (4 Sanatorium Ave.)

During the first three years after the new schoolhouse was occupied Mrs. Basset held her select school in the brick block over where Schneider's Bakery now stands, the same time Miss Sincebaugh was holding her select school over her Fathers grocery which was in the building now occupied by Karl Mitchell as a butcher shop. (17 Main Street).

Among the scholars who attended the District school when it was held in the basement of the Presbyterian church was Charles Loomis, Joel Northrup, Joe Fields, John Fields, John Carwithen, Horton Easton.

In the hollow where the east end of the Eric and Jersey Tunnel is now situated was a pond formed there by the Fall rains which when frozen made a skating pond for the scholars of the new District School and the Kelly Hill was the coasting place.

Otisville where it now stands was settled by Isaac Otis merchant from New York and the town was named after him, he lived on the Robert Robbins farm.



Rev. Robert Craig, Pastor
May 1, 1871 - March 31, 1884

In April of 2005, Edward Sisson, grandson of Rev. Robert Craig, gave the booklet pictured above to the Otisville - Mt. Hope Presbyterian Church

Special thanks to Nancie Craig and the
Mt. Hope Historical Society for arranging this gift.

The Indestructable Castle

I dreamed that I was wandering alone in a strange land. The day was hastening to its close, and I was greatly troubled because night would soon be on and I homeless and without a friend. My fears proved by no means ground-less, for in a moment "a horror of great darkness" came upon me, an insupportable weight rested upon my heart, and I cried in despair, "O, for a light to guide me in this unspeakable night!" The sound of my voice alarmed me, and looking, around to see if any human being was near, my eye was arrested by a light in the distance. At first I thought it a star, it shone with a flame so steady and brilliant; but as I peered through the darkness, still drawing nearer, I saw that it was a lamp suspended above the door of a large building, which I found to be a castle. Then I thought of the Psalm, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet." As I drew still nearer this other text came into my mind, "The entrance of Thy word giveth light."

I now approached the door hoping that some pitying one within would offer protection to a poor stranger, but before I had time to knock the door swung open and a gentle voice said tenderly, "Come in and welcome." Then the words of the hymn flashed across my mind, "Come to the light, 'tis shining for thee." I found the castle a structure of wonderful strength and beauty, and to all appearances very ancient. On inquiry I learned that it had stood for three thousand six hundred years, counting from the time they began to build it. The period of the building, from the laying of the foundation to the completion of the work, extended over seventeen hundred years, and the number of architects who completed the sixty-six distinct

departments was just forty, all noted for their great wisdom and piety.

Wherever I gazed I was captivated with so much design and beauty combined with great durability, and I asked how it came to be so. My guide informed me that the plan, even to the most minute detail, was designed by one great mind, that enemies had plotted its destruction from the first, and that the great Architect intended it to stand through all time.

"Surely no intelligent being would think of destroying a building so noble as this," I said. "It seems that the grander the building the more they plot to destroy it," he replied. "Only a few centuries ago a powerful enemy entered, with large forces, tried to deface its beauty and then set it on fire; but there was little of the combustible in it, and the fire could not consume it—you see; that gold and silver enter chiefly into its construction. At another time it was locked up by pretended friends, and no one was allowed to enter it, under penalty of death—the design was to let it crumble into ruins by mere disuse, but it stood just the same. Only, of course, its lamps went out and the country around was left in total darkness for a long time, till a great man rose up with giant strength and broke the bolts in pieces and opened the door."

By this time we had ascended to the top of one of the high towers. "Of course, no one attempts its destruction in these days. People ought to be proud of such an ancient castle as this," I remarked. My guide, smiling, said, "They dislike this castle because these lights, which never go out, throw their rays far and wide across the land, helping poor benighted pilgrims like yourself to a place of safety. Many deeds of darkness are continually being done outside; robberies and murders and other wicked acts are committed

constantly in the darkness of this world, and the light from this castle is all that hinders these bad men from greatly multiplying their accursed crimes. Without the light, all around us would be scenes of the most horrid cruelty and woe; for they love the darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.' "Are there any enemies around the walls tonight?" I asked. "Look and see for yourself," he replied, at the same time touching a key with his finger by which he turned on a flood of light that to me appeared as bright as day. Looking over the parapet, I saw a company of men around the walls, each with a little bag slung over his shoulder and a hammer in his hand, pounding away at the rock which formed the foundation of the building. "Who are these and what are they doing?" I cried. These are a species of geologist," said he. "They have hammered continually at this rock for years, but never yet succeeded in undermining the walls. They are volunteers in the service of the arch enemy, and they aim to chip away the foundation, which is sometimes called the Mosaic Rock—its right name is the Rock of Ages—succeeding in this, of course the building would fall. No, no, they can never succeed. Not even a single chip have they broken off yet, though they work day and night. When they strike very hard, however, a sort of dust rises up in their eyes and somewhat blinds them; but that is all the harm they can do."

"It's singular they persevere so long, when so very unsuccessful," I re-marked. "Well, when they succeed in making a dust they think they are gaining something; besides, when one party becomes tired it withdraws and a new company takes its place. Look further out," he said, pointing beyond, "and you will see another class of enemies." I looked, and behold, what seemed a great army covered the plain. They were commanded by a man of dark and distorted visage, whose face was

marked with a constitutional sneer. As they approached, the general commanded a halt. He then ordered them to surround the castle. With his trumpet to his lips he cried, "Ready, soldiers, sneer!" And the whole army sneered. I laughed aloud, and my guide seemed much amused, also. As soon as I could recover my speech I asked why they sneered, and if these great warriors expected to destroy a castle so fortified by a sneer?

"Such is the object of their attack," he assured me. "They pretend to see flaws and even great defects in the plan and in construction of the castle. They claim that much of it is offensive to their refined taste, and want a new, modern building suited to the present civilization, without a dungeon for criminals in it. As battering-rams, shells and other explosives of all kinds have failed, they now employ this novel method, thinking to bring the castle in disrepute, and so cause it to be abandoned. 'Ridicule,' they say, can accomplish more than an army of half a million."

At the same moment, looking further out over the plain, "Who are those venerable men approaching with arms full of books?"

I asked. "They seem to me like poets and philosophers, sages, who look through their golden spectacles, as if in veneration of so ancient a castle, who would protect rather than destroy it."

He replied, "These claim to be learned men, indeed. They are trying to prove by their books (some of them were written by themselves) that these walls were not built in seventeen hundred years, that the castle is not as solid as its history claims, that pseudo-architects built it for some bad purpose, and that its light makes the land far darker than it would be without it." "What good will that do them?" I asked in surprise. "No good, but much

evil," he said. "They, too, seek to bring the castle into disrepute, and then it can be destroyed, they think."

"If all these enemies are so determinately united against this castle, shall it not fall sooner or later?" said I, sadly. All these enemies so different seem in league," I said.

"Come with me," he replied, and taking me by the hand he led me into a secret apartment called the "archives"; then from an inner drawer taking out a roll, handed it to me, saying, "This is the charter given by the King of kings; open it and read." It was written on heavy parchment, with letters of gold, and having the King's great seal in blood red stamped upon it. I unrolled it and read, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my Word shall not pass away."

"Exactly so," he replied.

"What of these other men dressed in the

garb of religion, who stand over against the entrance," I asked. "They are religious by profession," he said, "but they are there to bar the way against pilgrims—those that are entering in they hinder. They claim that it is hurtful to the common people. The true reason is, they become enlightened in mind, independent in action, insubordinate to the head of their order, if allowed free entrance here, and so they keep them out. In olden times they burned alive all who tried to enter; now they merely hurl papal anathemas at them and thus frighten them away."

I awoke. It was a dream. "What can this indestructible castle be?" I said musing over what I had seen, and a spiritual voice answered to my wondering soul:

"It is the Bible!"

(Plainfield, N. J.)



View across Loomis' meadow. The First Presbyterian Church is left of center.(c. 1895)