

BETHEL CHURCH AND CEMETERY

PENDLETON COUNTY, KY. - U S 27 AND INTERSECTION 17

BUILDING BEGAN IN 1879 AND DEDICATED IN 1881 AND DESTROYED BY A
TORNADO ON 23 DECEMBER 2015

To build the Bethel Church, two Methodists, T. J. Campbell and Arthur Purdy, joined two Baptists, T. K. Bradford and Bryant Parsons, with donated help from both men and women to help with the construction. The plaster work was done by two of Falmouth's African-American citizens, as yet unnamed. When the money ran low before completion, J. W. Campbell and one of the local schoolteachers started out to the four corners of the county soliciting funds. They were successful in this endeavor and raised enough money to complete the church. Mrs. T. J. (Elvira Wallace) Campbell named the church, "Bethel." The first sermon delivered in the new church was delivered by a Baptist minister, Rev. Spillman. The first regular Baptist minister was Reverend Gabe Mullins. The first regular Methodist minister named was Reverend S. A. Day. Both denominations used the church for a number of years.

No names of the members exist for this time frame, as the early records were destroyed in a house fire. One interesting article in *The Falmouth Outlook* of 6 June 1908, mentions that the Methodist ladies of the congregation had donated money to purchase a new organ for the church. On a dark and stormy night, the organ was carried from the church to out on the pike and burned by an unknown party who objected to music in the church. In 1921, Will Stephenson was paid \$66.00 for building a rock wall in front of the church and graveyard. A new cistern was built in 1953.

Forward many years to 2006, when 4 recently retired men, Obie Fardo, Frank Hussung, Billy Newman and Charlie Pyles began the restoration of the Bethel Church. With help from volunteers and donations of money to buy the materials, the church was restored and rededicated on 15 September 2013. These four men were honored with the Ida Lee Willis Memorial Foundation Grassroots Preservation Award at the Kentucky Governor's mansion, Frankfort, KY., for their efforts. The church and cemetery were designated a Kentucky Landmark on 16 May 2008.

The Bethel Cemetery was begun with one acre of land donated by T. K. Bradford for a family cemetery. In 1885, Alex Emerich, added one acre, more or less, to the cemetery. At this time, a grave site sold for \$5.00. Later, cost increased to \$10.00 or \$50.00 for six sites. The cost of digging a grave was \$25.00.

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A group of volunteers came together with monetary donations and labor on 18 April 2008, to cut bushes and reset and/or repair the headstones.

In January of 2013, a member of the Bethel Cemetery Company was contacted by a member of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society, learning that a Medal of Honor recipient was buried at Bethel Cemetery. His name was John Rarreick (1845-1902.) Mr. Rarreick was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor on 3 October 1870 for gallantry in action during the Indian War at Lyry Creek, Arizona on 14 October 1869.

A new military marker was set for Mr. Rarreick with new and corrected information in March of 2014 with a memorial dedication led by Frank Hussung on 7 June 2014. The groups attending the dedication at Bethel Cemetery were: the Rarreick family; The Sons of the American Revolution - Simon Kenton Chapter; The Old Kentucky Primitives; The American Legion; members of the Bethel Cemetery company and members of the Pendleton County Historical & Genealogical Society. Taps were played by Charles Korzenborn, Sheriff of Kenton County, KY., Veteran of Foreign Wars. The benediction was by Brother Darrell Breeden, Mount Moriah Church and also by friends from the community.

The Bethel Cemetery sustained severe damage on 23 December 2015 due to the same tornado that destroyed the church building. There are large trees down and stones are broken and scattered. We will try to raise funds and volunteers to help restore the cemetery when the weather allows. We know of 400 burials in the cemetery.

Historical information provided by J. H. Bush, Virginia Utley and Elizabeth Campbell. Other information was furnished by Obie Fardo, Frank Hussung, Billy Newman and Charlie Pyles.

