

# The Third Church 1824 - 1890

Because of its rapid growth in membership, the second church had outlived its usefulness in a relatively short time. Twenty-six years after its construction, there appears a church record (no specific date available) written probably in early 1824 or slightly before, containing the following quote:

"Through the all destructive force of time our Ebenezer Church has become tottering and is on the verge of falling down; also, it has become inadequate to the needs of the present time. The time has come when a larger building is necessary to hold the greatly increased congregations. Being conscious of this and out of devout love for God, we for ourselves and for our descendants of the United Evangelical Lutheran and Reformed congregations, have resolved in the name of God to build a new church which we hope will fill the needs of our time and of generations to come.

Church records do not indicate on what date construction of the third church building got under way. However, we may assume that it was probably the latter half of the year 1823 and the early months of 1824, since dedicatory services were conducted 16 May 1824. An interesting account of how the money for the new structure was spent is recorded and given as follows:

Paid to George Fusselman, Master Carpenter	\$853.00
Paid to Peter Neff for Masonry Work	331.00
Paid for 1052 Bushels of Lime	110.82
Paid for 26,877 Ft Pine Boards	299.25 <sup>1/2</sup>
Paid for 9412 Shingles	61.18
Paid for Meals of the Masons	100.06
Paid for Worker's Helpers	99.78
Paid for Sawyer's Wages	73.40
Paid for Linseed Oil	25.50
Paid for Glass	45.81
Paid for Paint	57.04 <sup>1/2</sup>
Paid for Nails	51.01½
Paid for Blacksmith Work	166.73

Paid for Stones in the Church	64.51
Paid for the Stone in the Schoolhouse	14.00
Paid for Miscellaneous Items	<u>71.93½</u>
Total	\$2425.04"

A special building-fund collection was conducted among the church community sometime after construction of the church building. No specific date is given on the church document, but the names of one hundred thirty-one people are listed with the amounts contributed. The fund raised \$1701.35. In addition to this amount, \$732.18 was raised as a result of the following:

"Public Sale	\$ 93.15
Sale of Small Articles	19.77½
Collection at Dedication	181.38
Special Lutheran Offering	291.43½
Special Reformed Offering	146.44"
The total amount raised was	\$2433.53.

An interesting follow-up to this matter of receipts and costs regarding the third church building is a recorded audit of the raised funds. A translation from the German follows:

"On December 2, 1826, we, the auditors elected by the congregations examined the receipts and expenses of Mr. George Trine, treasurer, and with our signatures verify to its correctness:

Income	\$2433.53
Expenses	<u>\$2425.04</u>
Balance	\$8.49

"At the same time we give to him the balance of \$8.49 as a gift for his efforts and great care with which he kept the records.

/S/ Peter Miller

/S/ John Mosser"

At no time has there been a description given regarding the outside or inside appearance of the new structure. However, there are photographs available which appear with this history. They allow us to make a fairly accurate judgment regarding appearance.

Figure #3, an outside view, tells us the church was a rectangular stone structure with a shingled roof, standing about twenty-five feet east of the present parish house. It appears that all sides of the building had upper and lower rows of wood-framed windows. The upper windows appear to have been Romanesque in style; that is, they were completed with a rounded arch at the top. The rows of windows at the ground level were conventional or rectangular in style.

Figure #4 gives us a general view of the same area as Figure #3. It was made in the early 1960s, showing only the custodial home.

Figure #5, an inside view of the pulpit and chancel area, also allows us to make numerous and fairly reliable deductions. The church auditorium was probably a well-lit, one-floor area with a gallery. Because of the two tiers of recessed windows, the ceiling was quite high. The walls were plastered and adorned with highly finished, ornate wood paneling and framework, especially in the pulpit and chancel area. The pulpit, which was raised off the floor approximately seven to eight feet, was approached on both sides by a winding staircase supported by a balustrade on each side. Approximately six feet above the pulpit there was an octagonal decorated wooden canopy, supported by an ornate iron rod which was anchored in the wall directly above it. The rod can still be seen in the narthex of the present building.

A translated church record gives us an insight of the dedication ceremonies on May 16, 1824:

“We attest herewith and make it known to those present and to the generations to come, that today, the fourth Sunday after Easter, namely, the 16th of May in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1824, and in the 48th year of the independence of the United States of America, under the rule of the worthy president of said states, James Madison, and Vice President Daniel D. Tompkins, and the honorable German Governor of Pennsylvania, Joseph A. Schultze, we are laying in customary manner the cornerstone of a German Evangelical Reformed and Lutheran Church, which, with the blessing of God and our labors, when completed shall be dedicated in the name of God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and given the name, Ebenezer Church, in which shall be preached the gospel of Christ, loud and clear; the sacraments administered according to Christ's command; salutary instruction given necessary to sanctify the heart with true comfort in life and death.

"In order that posterity may know what our basic faith and religious writings are, we lay into the cornerstone not only a copy of this document and the attached by-laws by which we will be governed in the future, but also a Bible and a Lutheran and Reformed testament, and certain federal coins: one dollar, one quarter, one dime, one half dime, and one cent.

"Reformed Pastor Johann Gobrecht from Whitehall Township, Lehigh County, and Lutheran Pastor Conrad Yaeger from Hanover Township, Lehigh County, preached appropriate sermons to the assembled crowd. Pastor Yaeger's text was selected from First Kings, Chapter 7, Verses 17-19. Pastor Gobrecht selected his text from the book of Hebrews, Chapter 12, Verse 2.

Appropriate hymns and music were selected. Also the pastors of the Ebenezer congregations were present. Namely, Johannes Helffrich for the Reformed, and Pastors J. Doering and G. Wartmann for the Lutherans; also the schoolmaster, who serves the congregations, Jacob Salem."

The dedication ceremonies concluded with the recognition of the church officers in charge of construction as well as the master carpenter and mason:

For the Lutheran side	Jacob Mosser
	George Trein
For the Reformed side	Philip Ebert
	Jacob Fenstermacher
Master Carpenter	George Fusselman
Master Mason	Peter Neff

The issue regarding the construction and dedication of a new organ in the third church building is also worth noting. The organ, which existed in the first church structure, was destroyed with it in the storm of 1798. There are no records available to indicate that a new one was placed in the second structure, nor are there documents which tell us that there was an organ present in the newly constructed third building. The first reference we have regarding an organ appears in a church record dated 1 January 1851. A translation of the same reveals that in March, 1850, both congregations made a decision "to build a new organ.

The fact that the word "new" is used could leave us to speculate that there may have been an organ in the church which needed to be replaced. The record further indicates that the following building committee was selected by both church councils and congregations:

<u>Lutheran</u>	<u>Reformed</u>
Christian Kistler	Jacob Gumber
Joseph Moser	Johannes Neff

These gentlemen initiated the construction by signing a contract with Charles Heinzelman, organ builder from Weisenberg Township, and his assistant, L. Stettler. The cost of the new instrument was \$950 and was to be paid in the following installments:

- \$200 at beginning of construction
- \$500 shortly after dedication
- \$250 to be paid by 1 April 1851.

The agreement continues:

"Furthermore, the aforesaid Charles Heintzelman shall guarantee the organ workmanship and provide all necessary labor and parts as needed for two years following completion and dedication of this instrument."

On 18 October 1850, the organ was examined and played by Michael Eberhart of Allentown, and it was declared to be in fine condition. Dedication followed with service conducted on two days: Saturday, 18 October, and Sunday, 19 October 1850. Church organist at the time was Friedrich Schmidt.

One of the speakers at the dedication, Pastor William A. Helffrich, was the son of the then Reformed pastor of Ebenezer Church, Rev. Johannes Helffrich. William was ordained at Ebenezer Church in 1845 and succeeded his father as pastor in 1852. He describes an incident that took place as he was delivering his sermon on the second day of the organ dedicatory services:

"On the second day Grimm (guest speaker, Pastor C. H. Grimm, Lutheran) and I preached. As I was preaching people got up out of their seats and walked up the aisle to leave the building. I suggested to them they should remain seated until the service had been concluded. However, it was to no avail. They noisily went their way. I addressed the audience saying: 'Take a good look at them. I shall wait to proceed as soon as those bored people have left the building.'

The entire audience stared at the disturbers and there was absolute silence until the last yokel had gone through the door. Then I rhetorically asked the audience: 'Isn't it vulgar, brazen, and crude on the part of such people to disturb an entire congregation?' I can tell you, they were the last to leave before the service was over."

There is no question that the incident had left an indelible mark in the mind of Pastor Helffrich regarding parishioners at Ebenezer Church. Approximately four years later, as pastor of the Reformed congregation, he made the following statements:

"The congregation at Ebenezer has strange people. In fact, they are the most backward people among all the churches I am serving. It is difficult to make an impression. To be sure there are cordial and fervent parishioners; unfortunately, there are too few. All my sermons appear to pass over their heads without making an impression. There is also very poor church attendance. Those who are in attendance listen politely, but leave as they come. In my other parishes my sermons at least provide both positive and negative responses. Not so at Ebenezer. At best, the only comment might be: 'Today he really let them have it!' No one wishes to assume responsibility."

In 1853, seventy-seven years beyond the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the United States of America, led by its fourteenth president, Franklin Pierce, was preoccupied with the issue of slavery and was severely divided because of it. At the same time, the main issue at Ebenezer Church was the consideration of replacing a barn on the church property. A translation reveals the following:

"With the passing of time the barn on our school land has become too small and dilapidated to take care of the crops with which God has blessed us, and in May, 1853 the two congregations held counsel as to whether or not to build a new barn. The votes on both the Reformed and Lutheran sides showed that a new barn should be constructed and, therefore at the same time, John Neff, Peter Meyer, Christian Kistler, and Joseph Mosser were selected as building masters on the Lutheran and Reformed sides respectively.

"The building masters then made an agreement with John Reiz to do the carpenter work for \$75.00, whereby, however, all building materials were to be arranged for by the building masters. The masonry work was done by various members of the congregation at 90 cents per day.

"On the Lutheran side, their half of the costs was paid entirely out of their treasury. On the Reformed side, the fund was increased by a collection taken from the entire congregation.

The names of one hundred forty-nine persons and their contributions appear on the record.

Information regarding the first cemetery at Ebenezer Church is *somewhat* limited. We do know that a plot of ground, one hundred feet by two hundred feet, was set aside approximately two hundred feet to the *northeast* of our present building, and about twenty-five feet north of the existing band shell. However, we do not know the date in time when it was first utilized. Unfortunately, many of the early gravemarkers and stones are missing, predominantly those dated from 1761 (or possibly earlier) to 1790. It has even been rumored that the remains of Christianized Indians are also at rest in the old graveyard.

In 1966 Raymond Hollenbach, assisted by Raymond Mantz, compiled a list of two hundred thirty-two names taken from the tombstones of people who had been interred in the old graveyard between 1790 and 1885. It should be noted that there were additional names; however, the inscriptions were in many cases illegible and could not be recorded. An alphabetical listing of the names, including date of birth, date of death, and age, appears elsewhere in this history.

Although numerous burials were made in the old burial yard until late into the nineteenth century, the current cemetery, to the south of the existing church, was first used about 1857. A gentleman named John Bachman, who owned a farm across the road from the church property, subdivided two acres of land into sixteen-square foot lots which he sold for burial purposes. Eventually, Stephen Grimm, a son-in-law of Mr. Bachman, became the owner of the original farm. He proceeded to enlarge the then-existing cemetery and continued the sale of the plots. His heir, Achilles O. Grimm, continued the project.

Because of the numerous additions of land over the years, burials continue in the general area to this day, one hundred thirty-three years after the first interment.

It is believed that the first Sunday School at Ebenezer Church was organized about 1858, one year after the first plots were laid out on the new cemetery. According to the 50th-anniversary booklet, printed in 1940, no church records regarding the Sunday School prior to 1890 exist, "but some of the older members believe that sessions were held in the old church as early as 1853."

Assuming that this statement is reliable, the Sunday School, with its supplemental educational programs, has conveyed the Word of God to thousands of people for the past one hundred thirty-two years.

The erection of a new parochial school building in 1860, the year Abraham Lincoln was elected president, draws our attention to the role Ebenezer Church played in educating the children of its community during the previous one hundred twenty years. According to information available, Andrew Steiger was a talented teacher" who taught in the winter season during the organizational years of the Ebenezer congregations in the 1740s. What special facilities, if any, were available to him at the time is not known.

Reference to the first school building erected by the church is noted in a church document dated 25 August 1766, indicating plans to build; however, no details are given. We can surmise that the facility was of log construction since that was the standard material used for the first church five years earlier. Unfortunately, no further reference of Ebenezer's commitment to its educational programs is given until ninety-four years later, in 1860. In a history of Lehigh and Carbon Counties we note the following quotation made at the time regarding the old school building which was being replaced:

"The old schoolhouse which was first occupied by Jacob Salem, another capable teacher, was of stone and stood several feet further within the meadow than the present one (under construction). It had one story with a hall running through the middle. On the left side was the school room; on the right was a room used for a living room and sleeping room; also another small room used as a kitchen. The children slept in a loft where the snow was often blown in, and lay in heaps upon their beds in the morning."

Jacob Salem, whose name as schoolmaster appeared in the church record at the dedication of the third church building in 1824, is quoted above as having been the first teacher to occupy the building. Thus, we can theorize that the old building, which probably had been Ebenezer's second schoolhouse, was probably constructed in the early part of the nineteenth century.

With regard to the new school erected in 1860, a history of Lehigh and Carbon Counties provides us with the additional quotes:

"The congregation built a new dwelling house recently appropriate to the times. Here the old teacher, worn out by his manifold labors, spent with his spouse, a worthy German matron, and surrounded by their children, the declining years of his life in peace. Frederich Schmidt, who had served the congregation well and faithfully as a schoolmaster and organist for many years, had also brought the church lands, which had always lain neglected, by his industry to a fine state of cultivation. He was a man in every sense of the word; he was not only a well-educated school teacher from Germany, devoting himself with his whole heart to his calling, but was also faithful and honest without wavering. He died in April, 1876, and was interred on the twenty-seventh of the month with services held by Rev. William A. Helffrich and H. S. Fegley, the pastors of the church, in the cemetery of the congregation, whither his wife had already a short time preceded him. His son, Theodore, became his successor.

The quotation regarding the parish dwelling continues:

"At the same time with this house a two story brick schoolhouse with two rooms, one for the school, the other for the congregation, was also erected." (See Figure #3.)

If the foregoing information is accurate, we then know that the parish house and two-floor school were constructed together in 1860. The key to this date in time is the white date stone which appeared on top of the brick wall at the gable end of the schoolhouse. It is visible in a photograph appearing elsewhere in this history (see Figure #3).

The history of the date stone is also quite interesting. At the time the schoolhouse, built in 1860, was razed, the white marker with the 1860 imprint on it was buried in the rubble. It was never seen again until 1951, the year the old barn on the church property was razed. At that time, Willard Schmoyer, a son of Jane Oswald Schmoyer, discovered the stone in the debris of the ramp leading to the barn.<sup>5</sup> The stone can be seen in the nave of the present church.

In 1852 Pastor Johannes Helffrich, who had served the Reformed congregation at Ebenezer Church for thirty-six years, died. He was succeeded by his son, William A. Helffrich, the third of four from the same Helffrich family destined to serve as Reformed pastors at Ebenezer. It is interesting to note that he served twice. His first pastorate began during the turmoil of the pre-Civil-War years and extended through the war-years to 1867, the reconstructive period. Then, after an absence of seven years, and upon request of the Church Council, he returned in 1874 to serve his second pastorate which was to last but five years, due to poor health.

Although Pastor Helffrich had frequently been critical of parishioners during his first pastorate, he had a deep love for the Lynn Township Church. We quote the following remarks he made upon assuming his duties in 1874:

"I had never resigned from this congregation. It has always been seeking my advice."

The fact that he had been asked to return indicates the great affection the parishioners must have had for him. Upon noting how things had changed during his seven-year absence, we add translated comments of his:

"Members are in better attendance at church services. Also in other respects, it appears that the area is enjoying a new prosperity and expansion since the Berks County Railroad, extending from Reading to Slatington, passes through the area, including the church property, and brings with it increased traffic and a variety of services.

Of course, what Pastor Helffrich was referring to was the newly constructed transportation system completed in 1873. It was a sign of the times and was indicative of the railway expansion throughout America which was almost working a magical change in the way people lived. It did indeed bring about prosperity and growth of towns, cities, and farms in the East as well as the towns and farms of the wild prairies, forests and deserts of the West.

An observation of the surveyor's map, dated April, 1975, which appears elsewhere in this history, reveals to us that the Reading and Lehigh Railroad had procured from Ebenezer Church 1.691 acres of land situated a few hundred feet north of the Ontelaunee Creek for a right-of-way on which to lay its track. The ground in question bisected the church property from west to east or vice versa. Unfortunately, we were unable to find a church document which would verify a legal agreement between Ebenezer Church and the railroad company regarding the use of the land. Therefore, we must assume that such an agreement must have been drawn up a few years prior to 1873, the year the railroad began its service.<sup>6</sup>

Approximately fourteen years later, a German document, dated 16 July 1887, reveals the following:

"An election was conducted on the 16th day of July, 1887, as to whether or not the congregation should allow a siding to be built on the church property at the north side of the trestle. Twelve persons voted, all in favor."

The gentlemen voting on the issue were:

William Sittler	Moses D. Mantz
Stephen Grim	Monroe Heintzelman
John Smith	Owen Krause
Reuben Weaver	Nathan Snyder
Reuben Sittler	Jonas German
William Krause	Nathan Weiss

The railroad, nicknamed the "Berksy," provided the community with various services for approximately eighty-five years; passenger services were terminated in 1947 or 1948. The tracks in the area were dismantled and removed in the early 1960s.<sup>7</sup>

The roster of pastors who served the Ebenezer Lutheran and Reformed congregations during the years of the third church from 1824 to 1890 are listed according to succession. It should be noted that the exact dates of service for Lutheran pastors Jerimias Schindel, Peter Z. Oberfeld, E. A. Bauer, and W. Sieglin are lacking. It is known, however, that all of the gentlemen concerned were active at some time between 1828 and 1858.

**Lutheran**

**Reformed**

Joseph Doering	1824-1828	Johannes Helffrich	1824-1852
G. Wartman	1824-1828	William A. Helffrich	1852-1867

Jerimias Schindel	1828-1858	E. J. Fogel	1867-1874
Peter Z. Oberfeld	“ “	William A. Helffrich	1874-1879
E. A. Bauer	“ “	Nevin W. Helffrich	1879-1906
W. Sieglin	“ “		
Owen Leopold	1858-1861		
S. S. Klein	1861-1864		
Ludwig Zuber	1867-1869		
Henry S. Fegley	1869-1906		

The following biographical sketches regarding several of the aforementioned Lutheran and Reformed pastors was translated from the autobiographical accounts of the Reformed pastor, William A. Helffrich:

#### **JOHANNES HELFFRICH (Reformed)**

Pastor Helffrich, the second of four generations of pastors to serve the Reformed congregation at Ebenezer, began his pastorate during the time of the second church in 1816. He served the congregation for thirty-six years. He was a well-educated man for his time and a devout Christian, devoted to his profession.

He had a deep and abiding love for his home and family. A son of German immigrants, he was a stern disciplinarian and frequently dictatorial in his manner. He even made the decision as to the profession each son was to pursue. Heinrich became a physician and William followed in the footsteps of his father.

Pastor Helffrich was an ardent sportsman and taught his children how to hunt and fish at an early age. He loved spear-fishing and hunting raccoon at night with specially-trained dogs.

We also learn from his son's writings that he was an entrepreneur of sorts. He purchased twenty acres of land on the lower eastern slope of the Pinnacle in Berks County. It was his intention to establish a vineyard there. He hired a gardener to oversee the project. Unfortunately, the gardener pulled out the vines, sold them for a profit and disappeared. The venture ended sadly and costly for the pastor.

## **WILLIAM A. HELFFRICH (Reformed)**

Pastor William A. Helffrich was born and raised not far from the location of the present Ziegels Church, approximately two miles west of Fogelsville. His father (Johannes) was pastor of the church there at the time of William's birth.

As a result of a congenital respiratory ailment, he was destined to live out his life in frail health. Nevertheless, like his father he, too, became an avid hunter and fisherman, encouraging his children to participate in the activities.

Upon completing the courses prescribed in the public schools at the time, it was his father's desire to enroll him at Mercersburg Academy to prepare him for the ministry. However, because of a personal feud between the father and administrators at the academy, William was not enrolled. Consequently, arrangements were made for tutorial services for the boy at his home and also at an academy in Weisenberg Township. After several years of study, including courses in Greek, Latin, and German, William underwent a rigorous certification examination by officers of the Reformed Classis in 1844. He received his certification, and shortly thereafter, he was ordained in Ebenezer Church at the age of eighteen years.

Immediately after his ordination he began serving various Reformed congregations in Berks and Lehigh Counties. He also assisted his father on a part-time basis in his parishes, including Ebenezer. In fact, his name has already been mentioned earlier in this history as the frustrated speaker at the dedication of the church organ in 1850.

While serving at Ebenezer Church, Pastor Helffrich, on several occasions, was forced to take leave from his duties for rest and recuperation as a result of his poor health. He made several visits by train to the warmer climate of Florida and one journey by train to the West. Locally, he spent time to rest and recuperate in a cottage, located on the crest of the Blue Mountain to the north of the village of Jacksonville, where he was able to enjoy the invigorating fresh air and a panoramic view of the beautiful valley stretching south from the base of the mountain to the ridge of the Schocharie.

In 1879 Pastor Helffrich's health had deteriorated to the point where he no longer could carry on his pastoral duties full time. His son, Nevin, was asked to assist.

It should be noted here that during the seven-year hiatus (1867-1874) between the two pastorates of William A. Helffrich, the Reformed congregation was served on an interim basis by Pastor E. J. Fogel who, ironically, was a member of the Helffrich family through marriage. He was the brother-in-law of Pastor Helffrich. While serving Ebenezer on an interim basis, he was also serving Union, Jordan, Cedar Creek, and Morgenland congregations.

## **NEVIN W. HELFFRICH (Reformed)**

Nevin W. Helffrich was born in Fogelsville. He was educated in the local public and also private schools. Upon enrolling at Ursinus College, where he was preparing for the ministerial profession, he became involved in a personality clash with one of his professors. As a result, he

withdrew from the school, transferring to Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio. Having completed his preministerial studies there in 1877, he returned to Ursinus College to become enrolled in the theological school. He completed his studies there without any further personal conflicts which had plagued him several years earlier.

After his ordination, Pastor Helffrich began to serve as an assistant to his father. It was only a short time. In 1879 he became the fourth and final member of the Helffrich clan to serve the Reformed congregation at Ebenezer. He served during the final ten years of the third church and the first fifteen years of the fourth and present church.

As pastor, he held firm to the faith he had inherited from his forefathers. He never permitted himself to be compromised in dealing with matters of the church. Above all, he loathed orders, directions, and restrictions which occasionally led to minor quarrels with parishioners who were prepared to pass judgment upon him, not so much for the fact that he might have committed a transgression, but for the fact that he stood firm and unyielding with regard to his convictions. He bore all his burdens well, whether caused by himself or others. Whenever he came under severe pressure of any kind, he always seemed to gather extra strength. He served the Reformed congregation at Ebenezer until 1906.

The biographical sketches of the Lutheran pastors who served Ebenezer Church in the third building are somewhat limited. With the exception of the following biographies of Pastors Jerimias Schindel, Peter Oberfeld, and Henry Fegley, there is no information available about the other men who served the Lutheran congregation.

### **JERIMIAS SCHINDEL (Lutheran)**

The name of Jerimias Schindel first appears in the autobiographical writings of Pastor William A. Helffrich in the early 1840s. He had just recently been elected a Lutheran pastor at Ziegels Church where William was still a member of the Reformed congregation. Although it is not certain, it is believed that Pastor Schindel served several congregations in Lehigh and Berks Counties at that time, probably including Ebenezer.

Pastor Helffrich describes Jerimias Schindel, a native of Sunbury, as an eccentric individual who, in the early years of his ministry, stood before an open bedroom window at night in his home town, preaching aloud to whomever would listen, calling upon them to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord. Fortunately, Pastor Schindel, with experience, assumed the more orthodox pastoral manner of preaching his message from the pulpit of the churches he served.

Pastor Schindel became a very close friend of William A. Helffrich and was extremely helpful to him as he was preparing himself for the ministry. Jerimias Schindel, extremely articulate and an excellent debater, was a frequent house guest at the Helffrich family home, where he would help William to speak properly and debate certain themes, issues, and questions. He was so exuberant in assisting young William that frequently he stayed on for three days before thinking of leaving.

Pastor Schindel's name appears as a speaker at the organ dedication service in Ebenezer Church in 1850. It is thought that he was quite active as pastor at Ebenezer at this time since he is

mentioned as assisting the Reformed pastor, Johannes Helffrich, and his son and assistant, William, in coordinating intercongregational functions in 1851. It is quite possible that he spent most of the decade of the '50s at Ebenezer.

It is a fact, however, that Jerimias Schindel entered politics in 1858. At that time he became a candidate for the Pennsylvania State Senate, to which he was elected. When he began his new duties in Harrisburg, he failed to resign his pastoral responsibilities back home. To the dismay of his parishioners, he failed to show up for services from time to time, "causing great confusion." During his second year as a state senator he finally resigned his position at the churches concerned.

Pastor Schindel enrolled as a chaplain when the Civil War began, and served throughout most of the conflict. Upon discharge from his military duty, he preached in Sunbury. Shortly before his death he resided in Allentown.

### **PETER Z. OBERFELD (Lutheran)**

Peter Oberfeld emigrated from Mannheim, Germany, in the early years of the nineteenth century. He was a well-educated teacher and settled in Weisenberg Township, where he taught in a private academy. It was there that he became acquainted with Pastor William A. Helffrich. He served as one of his preceptors, teaching him the fundamentals of Greek, Latin, German, and other subjects from time to time. They became extremely close friends and Pastor Oberfeld, like Pastor Schindel, was a frequent house guest of the Helffrich family. Shortly after William's ordination in 1845, Peter Oberfeld showed more interest in preaching than in teaching. He began to move about, substituting for numerous pastors at various churches. William Helffrich on occasion would accompany him and conduct the opening and closing of services.

We know that Pastor Oberfeld was preaching at Ebenezer in the fall of 1850. According to the record, he preached to the Lutheran congregation there on Sunday, September 1. Upon conclusion of the service, he set out on horseback to Tamaqua, where he was then residing. The weather was extremely bad because of torrential downpours and flash flooding. Pastor Oberfeld supposedly arrived in Tamaqua after a very dangerous journey from New Tripoli. The house where he resided was already engulfed by water. The family, with whom he had resided, had fled. Pastor Oberfeld hurriedly entered the house to retrieve some of his personal belongings and quickly fled the scene on horseback. While fleeing, he came to a small bridge which had already been covered by the raging waters. The horse missed stepping onto the bridge. Pastor Oberfeld and the animal fell into the raging water. The animal was able to reach the bank of the stream, but Pastor Oberfeld was carried away and drowned.

Based upon Pastor Helffrich's records, it appears that Peter Oberfeld was not serving any parish on a permanent basis. He seems to have been mainly a supply pastor, and in all probability he served the Lutheran congregation of Ebenezer in that capacity.

### **HENRY S. FEGLEY (Lutheran)**

Pastor Fegley was a native of Boyertown. He was born there on September 15, 1843, and was educated at the Boyertown Academy. He also received private instruction from two preceptors, Pastor Wendt and Pastor Schaeffer. Upon completion of his professional training at the Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, May 19, 1869, he was ordained one week later in Reading.

Pastor Fegley's professional career began immediately upon his ordination. He accepted a call to serve the New Tripoli Parish, which was to be the first and only parish that he would serve in his lifetime. The parish churches he served, including Ebenezer, were: Jacob's Church, Jacksonville; Jerusalem Church, Albany; St. Peter's Church, Lynnville; and St. Paul's Church, Seiberlingsville. He served the parish for thirty-seven years.