

History of Westminster United Presbyterian Church

Westminster Presbyterian Church had its beginning in 1875 with the installation on October 9th of Rev. T. G. Sherrard as pastor of the newly organized Mifflintown congregation previously known as Cedar Spring. "It was nearly a century and a quarter since the Presbyterians of this valley first associated themselves together in a congregation for the worship of God."¹

The early history begins after the surrender of Fort Duquesne in November 1758, when many persons in eastern Pennsylvania began in the spring of 1759 to emigrate westward and into the Tuscarora valley. Records indicate that the first organized activity occurred in 1760 when James Purdy and James Patterson were sent to Philadelphia to procure a warrant from the Proprietary Government for 200 acres of land for a "Meeting House" and a grave-yard. This land was about three miles from Mifflintown and about a half-mile from Cedar Spring. With each member agreeing to furnish a quantity of logs of certain dimensions delivered to the site, the raising of the first log church was started. However, when they reached a height of one-story, an alarm was received of Indian attacks on the border settlements and they had to flee to Carlisle.

In 1763 the French and Indian war was terminated and settlers began returning to their frontier homes with considerable increase to their numbers and in due time the log "meeting house" was completed. It is not known if they were visited by an ordained minister prior to 1766, but in that year two missionaries, Rev. Charles Beatty and Rev. George Duffield, on their way to visit the Indians on the Ohio frontier, spent several days and preached to the congregation at both Cedar Spring and Tuscarora (Academia.)

¹From the *Historic Sermon* by Rev. Sherrard in 1875