

History of  
HISSES CHAPEL  
and  
GREAT FALLS CIRCUIT  
1839 – 1982

by  
Donald Andrew Wiley

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## Chapter I Great Falls Circuit

Great Falls Circuit was not a pioneer circuit nor was it a circuit that was intended to expand the Wesleyan doctrine into hinterlands previously unserved by the circuit riders. Rather, as the population of the young nation increased and the number of meeting houses rose, Fells Point Circuit was created in, 1806. Fells Point was to serve the spiritual needs of the Methodists in eastern and northern Baltimore County, taking from the territory of Harford Circuit and North and East Baltimore Circuits. The name, Fells Point, lasted only three years and in 1809, Great Falls Circuit was born.

The new Great Falls Circuit, "our circuit of magnificent distances", covered an area of about 250 square miles of Baltimore County, from the industrial south and east forming a large crescent through fertile, rolling farm land, north, near the Pennsylvania border. Twenty-two appointments are listed in the earliest records of 1809: Algier's MH, Bond's Borings ME, Bosley's ME, Camp Chapel, Chamber's MH, Cole's ME, Cullison's MH, Ebenezer Chapel, Forks Chapel, Foster's Chapel (later Hereford), Galloway's MR, Gatch's MH, Gorsuch's MB, Lasourd's MH, Oram's MH (or Orem's), Patapsco Wilson's MH. Territorial limits of the new circuit remained about constant until 1843.

By the year 1839, the year local tradition claims, with some justification, as the real genesis of Hiss Church, Great Falls still covered an enormous territory. Life was not easy for the two traveling preachers who ministered to the Methodists on the circuit. Travel was by horseback or buggy and the circuit riders were either choking with dust and heat in summer, struggling along with the horse to wade through foot deep mud in spring or trying to keep from becoming frostbitten in the dead of winter. Little paving existed on the few rural roads, the best of which were the broken stone and gravel turnpike roads, and snow or spring floods frequently made travel nearly impossible.

The number of appointments on the circuit was, in 1839, down to nineteen and several of those were new. First Quarter Conference minutes of April, 1839 listed appointments at Baltimore Factory (later Franklinville MH, then Salem Church) Bosley's MH, Camp Chapel MH, Dover SH, Ebenezer MH, Fork MH, Foster's MN, Friendship SH, Gatches MH, Jessop's MH, Mount Nebo (later Mt. Carmel), Patapsco MH, John Pearce's, Orem's MH, Thomas B. Sargent's MB, Shaw's MH (later Wesley Chapel), Warren Factory, Wilson's MH and Wiseburgh. It was also by 1839 that one principal event had gradually taken place and a second was about to strike swiftly, without warning; two events that would contribute significantly to the creation of Hiss Chapel.

First was the opening of the Baltimore and Harford Turnpike Road. Authorized by the Maryland Legislature in 1816, the road was making somewhat easier, travel - though not much - for families leaving, the tired, worn out tobacco farms of southern Maryland and relocating northward into upper Baltimore County and Harford County, reversing a gradually declining population in Baltimore County that occurred during the first decade of the nineteenth century. In and around the Lavander Hill area, as Parkville was known in those days, Robert Purviance, Jr., and others, began buying up large parcels of the old "Grindon" tract and sub-dividing the land.

The second event was far more dramatic than the first and was undoubtedly the real inducement for the creation of the Hiss Chapel. Jacob Hiss, Sr., (b. May 16, 1762) the patriarch of the Hiss family died! Death for Jacob was swift, and shocking for the family, being struck by a bolt of lightning from a summer storm that ripped through the area on July 11, 1829. Jacob had tied strong bonds with the Gatch Meeting House over the years and had been Class Leader at Gatch Meeting House since 1819. He was also a Trustee of Gatch's at the time of his death. The Hiss family, Jacob and his wife Elizabeth Gatch Hiss, and those of the eight sons and eight daughters who remained at home, had always been in their places when worship was held at Gatch's Meeting House even though it meant traveling relatively long distances. William Hiss, (b. Dec. 9, 1801; d. Aug. 25, 1860), the youngest son of Jacob and Elizabeth, saw a need for a Methodist Meeting House in the area of the Hiss homestead and began to hold Class Meetings at the family home. When these meetings began is speculation, however, Thomas Parlett, a neighbor long associated with the Hiss family, appears in the circuit records for the first time as Class Leader, 1840 - 1841.

It was becoming increasingly difficult for the two preachers to adequately serve the territory which had been assigned to them and in 1842 the first hint at division appears in the circuit records. Camp meetings, a long tradition of early Methodists, were an almost annual occurrence for Great Falls Circuit. These meetings were usually held at either the circuit campground adjacent to Camp Chapel MR or on the lands of \_\_\_\_\_ Cockey. Often, Great Falls Circuit met jointly with the church at East Baltimore station. In 1842, however, the circuit resolved to hold two meetings, the first to be held at Camp Chapel. The second meeting, for the upper part of the circuit, was to be held at a different, but unidentified, time and place.

The decision to split the circuit came early in 1843. In an attempt to keep the circuit intact, the idea was raised at the Fourth Quarterly Conference of January 1843 to add a third preacher but when placed before the conference as a motion, it failed. This abortive attempt to maintain the circuit was followed by a motion to divide. This motion carried by a large majority and action by the Baltimore Annual Conference later that year completed the division into two circuits, Great Falls and Hereford. Great Falls was now reduced to an area of about 110 square miles and the new list of appointments included Baltimore Factory, Camp Chapel, Ebenezer, Fork, Friendship, Gatches, Orems, Patapsco, Wilsons, and two new appointments, Asbury School House and Hiss Chapel. This division was soon to have a serious economic impact on the new Great Falls Circuit.

The circuit continued to hold camp meetings almost annually and continued also to "Most respectfully and affectionally" invite the North Baltimore, East Baltimore, High Street and Caroline Street charges to encamp with the people of Great Falls. It was the wish of the people of Great Falls to grant those various Baltimore stations "equal rights and privileges in the locations of tents and other matters." However, it was not set up on a first come, first served basis in the selection of tenting areas. At the First Quarterly Conference in April, 1849, it was resolved that "those persons formerly tented on the grounds shall, be entitled to the same location, provided the camp be held at the ,same

place and they desire to occupy them for themselves - otherwise the lots shall be under the control of the Camp Meeting Committee." The campground adjacent to Camp Chapel remained as the primary camping facility until it was sold in 1869 during times of circuit property settlements.

Changes were occurring around the circuit during the late 1840's and 1850's. Baltimore Factory had changed its name and location, alternating with Franklinville from 1844 to 1819 and then moved permanently to Salem in June 1849. Waugh's Church joined in 1850 and Howard's Furnace in 1854. Back River appointment started in 1858. It was during the 1850's also that the circuit's black congregations were identified as independent and self-supporting appointments, congregations being listed at Mt. Hope, John Wesley and Asbury, the latter of which also had a white congregation.

There was a brief time when some of the official actions of the circuit seem today, to be other than in the best interest of the community. During the first third of the 1850's, two men were tried by the Quarterly Conference and expelled from the church. Both men were of some note in the community and in the church, both having taken part in the construction of the stone parsonage and one was a trustee at both the Gatch and Hiss appointments. The trial, appeal and reversal, and then the re-trial of Robert B. Proctor in 1851 was the first. Proctor was expelled by a conference vote of 16 to 0 after his own defense and a defense speech by Nicholas Gatch. Two years later in February 1853, Nicholas Gatch, a trustee, was expelled after a patient and lengthy trial. The Charges against the two men has not been discovered.

It was a time of building too. New churches were proposed for Ebenezer and Orem's (1853), Howard's Furnace (1854), Catch and Hiss (1856) and Asbury Chapel (1859). Although all of the building plans did not materialize, this ten year period, 1850-1860, was a time of both growth and frustration for the circuit. In 1854, the circuit reported a total membership of 560, of whom 95, or 17% were black. Despite a circuit amide growing membership, finances were still a problem. Harsh winter -weather forced the closing of most of the Sunday Schools each year after Christmas until late March or early April the following year. Income was dropping and local apportionments were not being met. The new parsonage on the Baltimore and Harford Turnpike was in debt. Gatch reported a deficit in its building funds and then in 1858 Orem's church was destroyed by fire when a spark from a passing train of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad ignited the frame structure.

Rev. Richard Brown returned to the circuit for the second time as senior pastor in 1859. In May of that year, a third preacher was again requested and "Brother, H. C. Smith of Jefferson Street in Baltimore was appealed to and consented to serve the circuit for \$300 and live in the parsonage." The short convenience of three pastors came to an abrupt end on August 5, 1859 when Rev. Brown was killed by a horse. The circuit would never again have three pastors except on a few rare and limited occasions.

Political tensions stemming from the slavery issue were to soon strain the meager resources of Great Falls and eventually contribute to a second division in 1864. The

upper portion of the circuit had men such as Ishamael Day who was a known federalist. It was Day who defied an order by one of Harry Gilmore's raiders to lower his (Day's) Federal flag on July 11, 1864. Day shot the sergeant as the soldier pulled down the flag, escaped into the woods and had his home and outbuildings burned for his actions. In the southern part of the circuit, the Hiss family had been slaveholders. William Hiss, at the time of his death, owned four slaves, two men and two women. The circuit was divided, by action of the Bishop, prior to the First Quarterly Conference of May 1864.

This division, which created Long Green Circuit, left Great Falls with eight appointments: Orem's MB, Ebenezer MB, Catches MB, Patapsco MB, Camp Chapel MB, Hiss Chapel, Asbury SH and Howard's Furnace. It was this division also that would tax the financial resources of the remaining appointments, the parsonage being still in debt. The line of division splitting the two circuits, the Gunpowder Falls, was not the line that satisfied all members of the circuit for many had been pressing for the Philadelphia Road to be the division. So there were still grumblings throughout the remaining Great Falls territory. People began staying away. At the First Quarterly Conference of May, 1865 the pastor's report stated:

"Report on the general condition of the charge. The Pastor is savvy to be compelled to report that the general condition of the circuit is not satisfactory. Much alienation of feeling exists among the members in consequence of which many absent themselves from the House of God making our congregations small. Class meeting is entirely abandoned by many and only attended by a few. Some who are the most able to support the institution of the Church have entirely withdrawn from it. Political questions have had much to do in introducing this state of things and as a better state of affairs begins to dawn on the country it is hoped the church will share in its benefits. The neglect of Pastoral visitation for years that are past may also have contributed to the present state of affairs."

Submitted by

Rev. E. Welty

But all things eventually pass. As the realization that the war was over and the awareness of the church once more spread through the community, the people began to return to meeting. Revival meetings, especially at Ebenezer and at Hiss, were bringing more people to the church. With increased membership this time being the principle cause, considerations began again to divide the circuit a third time. One plan had the four upper appointments uniting with Long Green Circuit but when division came in 1869, it was the eastern four appointments that were cut loose. Asbury, Ebenezer, Orem and Patapsco now made up the East Baltimore Circuit.

The division this time was based on numbers of members and the related problems in pastoral service to such members. But money, the difficulty in supporting the pastors, led to a reunion of the circuit in 1871. Thomas Gorsuch and Jabez Blackburn

continued to provide fine leadership through the entire period of the two recent divisions and one reunion. Both men served as local preachers and parsonage trustees. Blackburn was a trustee at Hiss and Gorsuch a trustee of the Baltimore County School Board for the L.C. district where the Hiss School was.

The 1870's was a period of great growth and revival around Great Falls. Rev. James G. Moore was a moving force during this time. During his pastorate (1871-1873) Rev. Moore made over 1,000 pastoral calls alone and nearly 300 joint visits with the junior preacher. The real significance of this number of calls will be seen later during the pastorate of Rev. Thomas S. Long. At one point during the late summer of 1872, a meeting at Hiss "lasting several weeks, resulted in the conversion of about 20 souls" and there was "a general awakening among the people". In early 1873, a revival "converted about 100 souls (and) a number of backsliders were reclaimed." Again in late 1873, "50 souls (were) converted" and in the last quarter of 1873, Rev. Moore made 215 pastoral visits alone and 290 visits jointly with the junior preacher, Rev. G.W. Maydwell. Upon Moore's retirement at the Fourth Quarterly Conference, January 3 and 4, 1874 it was reported that he had "attended about 50 funerals, baptized over 100 and received into the church over 100".

Then at the end of 1878, Jabez Blackburn died. His passing left a void among his friends on the circuit. The feelings the members of circuit had for Rev. Blackburn were summed up in an obituary read into the minutes by Thomas Gorsuch:

"Brother Blackburn was born in Lincolnshire, England, February 6, 1816. Converted in the seventeenth year of his age. Licensed a local preacher in the town of his birth at the age of eighteen. Continued to preach until he left for America, September, 1842. Two years afterward he returned to England and there was married to Ann Walton, January 27, 1845. After his first visit to America in the year 1842, he joined the M.E. Church at the first toll gate on the Harford Road known then as Gorsuch's Church. In 1848 he moved his membership to Hiss M. E. Church where he lived and died a consistent, faithful Christian.

When he came to America he failed to bring his credentials with him, having misplaced or lost them. The result was he was left without license to officiate as a local preacher. In 1857, the class of which he was a member recommended him for license to preach which he soon afterward received. In 1862 he received Deacons orders. As a preacher he was sound in Theology, well versed in scripture and a power in prayer. Everyone that knew him reposed the utmost confidence in him as a Christian.

He was always ready and willing to work whenever called upon or an opportunity presented itself. He was always in time to preach or to hear the word of God. Now, we the Membership of the Quarterly Conference assembled have heard with deep emotions and regret of the death of our beloved brother Rev. J. F. Blackburn. Who after spending upwards of

forty-two years in the service of God and the church as a local preacher fell sweetly asleep in Jesus December 12, 1878 in the 62nd year of his age.

Resolved that while we bow in perfect submission to him who inflicts the blow, we remember that he is too wise to err and too good to be unkind. We will ever cherish the memory of our fellow laborer and associate for his many excellent qualities and for his untiring efforts to promote the interest of the church in which he so faithfully labored and in whose communion he lived and died. Thus, leaving to his relatives and friends, the rich legacy of a noble christian character. Resolved that we offer our condolence to the widow and family of our deceased brother assuring them of our profound sympathy in their loss and praying that the same all wise providence that supported their devoted husband and father in life and took him from labor to reward may comfort and console thin under this sad dispensation of his providence."

Brother Blackburn was laid to rest in the Hiss graveyard. As is nearly everyone who dies, he would be missed, but the circuit would continue to grow. In the spring of 1879 the Sunday Schools reopened after closing for the winter and with the reopening the circuit experienced "increased numerical strength perhaps never equaled before in the history of the circuit." With the addition of twelve persons, the circuit now claimed 305 full members. The following year brought reforms to the Sunday Schools and the music tradition at Hiss which has lasted to this day, began.

At the beginning of 1880 there were 325 full members on the circuit and the people of Hiss, mindful of the quality of worship offered to their Creator, purchased a "fine organ" and began to incorporate the music into services. After only three months of witnessing the results of this music, the members of the Quarterly Conference recommended that all of the churches and Sunday schools obtain and use the organ along with the new hymnal.

It was also in February, 1880, that the senior pastor, Rev. R. R. Murphy urged the various "Sabbath Schools" to completely revise the system of teaching and substitute a new text, the Burian Lessons. "The children have enough of A.B.C. Ba and Bla's during the week. They want something new. Every spelling book should be taken from our Sunday School and object teaching substituted. We believe if these were substituted in our schools and the suggestions of Dr. Vincent, the able editor of the Journal and General Sunday School Agent, carried out, that our children would learn more about the Bible in six months than they will in six years by adhering to the old method." The recommendations were carried out and the Burian Lessons were soon distributed throughout the circuit.

In 1888, Providence Church joined the circuit bringing the number of appointments back to eight. Asbury had not rejoined the circuit after the division of 1869. The appointment at Hiss was becoming one of the largest meetings on the circuit, having 90 full members and 20 probationers at the beginning of 1889. Then in 1890 another



attempt to create two circuits, east and west, failed. "By a rising vote of 10 to 4, the Bishop was requested to set apart the following churches now embraced in the territory of Great Falls Circuit as a separate and distinct charge, to be known as Middle River Circuit, viz, Ebenezer, Forges, Back River and Orems." The members of the Quarterly Conference protected themselves financially by further resolving that "in the event that said charge of Middle River Circuit be created that the said circuit make no claim for any of the Parsonage property of the Great Falls Circuit."

A new appointment, Lorely, was added in 1890 and at that time the Forge appointment was dropped. During the same year, two building committees were established, one for Providence and the other for Lorely. It was also reported by the junior preacher, Rev. William H. Dell, that there were "four vigorous saloons in the territory." The annual conference had decided too that the circuit boundaries would remain intact and no division was to be made.

Revival again swept the circuit. Rev. Joseph P. Wilson, the senior pastor, reported that during the year 1891 a total of 86 conversions took place over the circuit. Most of these were added during services at Providence where "twenty-eight souls (were) born again." At Hiss there were eight conversions during that time.

By 1892 the membership of the Hiss appointment reached 100 and the membership soon passed a resolution to build a new church (May 1, 1893) which was completed and in use by February 1895. Winter and spring (1900-1901) was a time of sickness around Great Falls. The junior preacher, L. N. Ferguson reported to the Quarterly Conference that much of his time had been spent attending to the needs of those stricken by typhoid fever. He further reported that "while epidemic has been severe, there has been great cause for thankfulness that it has not been fatal."

The severe snow storm of February, 1900, provided the background for a remarkable story on hardships faced by circuit preachers of that era. The following is a story that appeared in the May 1976 issue of the Hiss Newsletter:

Friday, February 16, 1900, began quietly enough, the temperature was in the mid forties and the weather forecast suggested a not too uncomfortable Sunday trip pending for the senior pastor of Great Falls Circuit. Rev. Thomas S. Long was at work in his study at the parsonage on the Harford Road, making final preparations for his sermons to be preached at Back River and at Ebenezer Appointments on Sunday, February 18. By afternoon snow had begun falling and by Saturday morning about three inches of heavy, wet snow covered the ground. Still, there was no cause for serious concern for no snowfall could possibly have the impact of the storm that struck just one year before when, on Sunday and Monday, February 12 and 13, 1899, thirty inches of snow fell over the circuit. Snow continued to fall all day Saturday the 17th, unabated for about thirty hours. The intensity of the storm and size of the flakes at times restricted visibility to only a few feet.

Sunday morning broke clear and cold. In Baltimore City the steamships Essex and Ida, due in the harbor at six o'clock in the morning, had not yet arrived from their struggle up the Chesapeake Bay. Snow was no longer falling and Rev. Long, bundled against the cold, threw a blanket over his horse, hitched up his buggy and set out from the parsonage, determined to reach his scheduled appointments. Ebenezer was especially important that day for the Pastor had been advertised to preach a special sermon before Victory Council, Junior Order United American Mechanics on the topic Man-His Country and His God.

The temperature had dropped to thirteen degrees and the seventeen mile per hour gusts of wind had whipped the snow into frothy mounds of up to seven feet in places. On the level the snow was about eighteen inches deep. In modern jargon, the "wind chill index" would have been about minus fifteen degrees, hardly fit weather for a man and his horse!

Normally only a twenty minute drive by buggy, it took one hour to reach the home of Hiss member George W. Grammer at Belair Road and Putty Hill Avenue. It was fortunate that the Grammer place was on the way that particular Sunday. Brother Grammer was a funeral director and wainwright and as such had a variety of coaches and carriages available and, most important, at least one sleigh. Brother Grammer and the Pastor unhitched the nearly useless buggy from the tired horse and hitched up the sleigh. With a wave and a prayer the Pastor left the Grammer place and struck out again for his scheduled appointments, this time taking to the fields where roads were impassable.

By the time the horse had managed to pull the sleigh as far as the Philadelphia Road, it was too late to get to Back River Church, so the Pastor faced on toward Ebenezer. A welcome rest and dinner was enjoyed on the way at Ebenezer member William J. Porter's house. After that brief stop, the Pastor pressed on for the final four miles or so to Ebenezer Church, only to arrive there at half past two in the afternoon and find the building locked and no one in sight. Undaunted, Rev. Long climbed back onto the sleigh and set out for the home of a sick child near Bergier Station (Bengies?), having been sent for a few days earlier to baptize the child. After the baptism, the Pastor returned to Mr. Porter's house for supper. Meanwhile, in Baltimore, the steamships Essex from the Rappahannock River in Virginia and Ida from the Piankatank River, now released from the grip of the snow and fog, docked sometime after seven o'clock in the evening, more than thirteen hours late. After supper, the evening was spent with Uncle John Cowley (member, Orem's appointment) who lived near Mr. Porter. Early Monday morning the Pastor drove back to the parsonage with but a brief stop at Grammer's to return the sleigh and pick up the buggy.

The Pastor drove more than thirty miles under rather severe conditions during the two day trip and was able to record but two official pastoral visits, one to the sick child and the other to a sick family. It is significant that Rev. Thomas S. Long had a busy schedule completing, up to the Fourth Quarterly Conference (January 29, 1900), 774 pastoral visits.

During the winter of 1901 and on through 1902, Frank R. Isaacs, the then preacher-in-charge gave reports of mixed emotions. Rev. Isaacs seemed distressed at the poor attendance at night meetings and dismay at the great number of oyster suppers. It might be that the parishioners were then more interested at feeding the body rather than the soul! Isaacs expressed his pleasure at the new fireplace heater and new bookcase at the parsonage. By spring of 1903, the preacher-in-charge expressed "great gratification" that despite many successive Sabbaths of horrible weather, the financial obligation of Great Falls, insofar as missions and benevolences were concerned, would not suffer.

Early in 1904 an effort to divide the circuit was begun. The initial committee consisted of Thomas Gorsuch, Alex McCormick, William S. Treadwell, J. A. Sheridan, James A. Francis and James C. Tutchton. At the committee meeting, four of five members present agreed that division was in the best interest of the Circuit but the financial burden of a second parsonage would make division impossible. Frank R. Isaacs reported in 1905 that the only way to have mercy upon the pastors and to develop the various appointments would be to split the circuit. The six appointments Hiss, Camp Chapel, Ebenezer, Back River, Orem's and Providence covered about sixty square miles, a far cry from the limits of the previous century.

In 1908, Ebenezer built its own parsonage and assumed the maintenance of that property alone. This action led to the decision in 1910 to divide the circuit into two divisions, eastern and western, with one quarterly conference. The vote on this action was 20 to 1 in favor of division. Sometime during 1916 came the official separation of east and west divisions, creating Chase Circuit out of Great Falls.

Social life was not lacking at Great Falls. One of the most notable events was the Harvest Home and Dahlia Show held at the R. Vincent, Jr., and Sons Co. Warehouse. An annual four day affair began in 1907, the fair and supper was highlighted by 40 acres of dahlias in full bloom, plus a greenhouse "lighted up at night by electric lights." The fair in 1907 raised \$2,811, the money going to build the new parsonage at Ebenezer.

Politics again rose to the forefront in 1911. The conference passed a resolution pledging to secure a better observance of the "Lord's Day as a day of rest and worship". The signers of this resolution further pledged to call upon the voters of Baltimore County to vote for candidates who supported the views of Sunday blue laws. The resolution was signed by 31 members of the conference.

The year 1922 was another significant milestone in the History of Great Falls and Hiss. District Superintendent, John T. Ensor, reported to the Baltimore Annual Conference as follows:

"Just outside the city line, Hiss Church is asking to be cut loose from Great Falls circuit, being convinced that it is well able to support a pastor. This is a strong center just becoming conscious of its ability and its far reaching opportunity."

The Conference concurred and the confidence expressed by the annual conference was well received by Hiss and the stability of the congregation has been proved beyond a shadow of a doubt.

## Chapter 2 Hisses Chapel

Little did people realize, at the time, that the dramatic event of July 11, 1839, the untimely death of Jacob Hiss, would have an effect on Parkville that would last into the next century and probably beyond. Although not confirmed, it appears that William Hiss-sometimes known as Dr. Hiss because of his good works, not because of his occupation-and Thomas Parlett, a Hiss neighbor, decided almost immediately to establish a Meeting House in their community. William had inherited the mansion and family lands from his father and, together with Parlett who was willing to assume the role of Class Leader, Hisses Chapel was begun. Together the two men planned for the future of this tiny Wesleyan community in Lavender Hill. With William and his sister Christianna able to provide financial support and Thomas supplying the vital spiritual leadership the small meeting flourished. Within three years sufficient funds had been raised or promised to build a small stone chapel.

William purchased 34 acres of land on the west side of the Turnpike Road in June of 1842. He paid \$856.25 to Robert Purviance, Jr. and William Connine for the land. The stone chapel was promptly erected on that tract and in 1844, William made a gift of one acre, where the chapel stood, to the Trustees of the ME Church. Hisses Chapel first appears as an appointment on Great Falls Circuit in the circuit records of January 1843. Over the door of the chapel is the date stone with the year 1842 carved into it.

As more families settled in the area, the chapel became the focal point and was the stimulant for more building. In 1846 a one room public school, known as Hiss School, was built on the same 34 acre parcel. Then, in 1849, further confidence in the permanence of the community was displayed by the decision of the circuit to construct the fine stone parsonage.

The first evidence of growth at Hiss is mentioned in 1856 when consideration was given to adding 20 feet to the front of the chapel. Mrs. Shanklin, James Fowler and C. A. Slicer were the committee members assigned to the investigation. Then in 1856 a new committee of Edward Slicer, John Shanklin and William Hiss was appointed. In 1859 the committee was expanded by the addition of John Reese and James Fowler and the group was charged with "estimating and considering" a new church for Hiss. Nothing came from these considerations and the chapel continued to serve as the principal place of worship until 1895.

By the year 1833 the membership of Hiss had grown to 100. While average attendance was only 20, the membership passed a resolution to build a new church and requested the Quarterly Conference to appoint a building committee "so that proper steps may be taken to push forward this important enterprise." The committee consisted of Brothers Blackburn, Babikow, White, Willingham and Parlett. After several meetings of the group and their report that stated "the outlook for building the new church is encouraging at the present," Hiss decided to build. In July 1893 the conference granted the necessary permission to the people of Hiss and in addition offered a piece of the parsonage land for the building. Next year, 1894, the congregation chose to build on a

tract of land donated by William Hiss in October 1850. The title of this land was clouded due to Hiss stating in his gift that the land was to be used for a school. Since a public school had been built in 1846 the problem was resolved by a new deed from the Hiss heirs in 1896.

During the spring of 1894, sixteen persons from Hiss volunteered their time to dig the foundation of the new church by hand. Then on May 14, 1894, a contract was entered into with Brother John A. Sheridan of Ebenezer ME Church for the construction of the new building. Cost of the structure was \$2,350.00. By October the building was nearly weatherboarded and the cornerstone was laid on Wednesday, November 14, 1894, Rev. William S. Edwards, D.D. officiating. The date is contrary to the date carved into the stone. Dedication of the building was on February 10, 1895 and a newspaper account of the day says:

"The Pretty New M.E. Church at Hiss Appointment, Parkville, Harford Road, was dedicated on Sunday, February 10, 1895. The ceremonies were in charge of Rev. William S. Edwards, D.C., Presiding Elder, who preached at 10:30 A.M. Rev. W. G. Herbert preached in the afternoon and Rev. C. E. Guthrie in the evening. All the services were largely attended and the collections during the day and evening amounted to about \$600.

The church is gothic in architecture and has a frontage of 36 feet and a depth of 56 feet, with a recess of 4 feet for the pulpit. The main room is lighted by ten large stained-glass windows and two memorial windows. The frames are of gothic design. The pulpit is of quartered oak. The seats and backs of the pews are of ash, and the pew ends of birch, finished in light mahogany. The ceiling is 16 feet high at the sides and 23 feet high in the center. Two double-bracket brass chandeliers adorn the pulpit. The aisles are neatly carpeted. A tower 11 feet square rises sixty-five feet. Mr. John A. Sheridan, of Chase, was the contractor and builder. The cost of the structure complete was about \$3,600, nearly the whole of which has been provided for.

The Trustees are William Fuller, Sr., William White, Robert H. Blackburn, C. Howard Amoss, Charles Earhardt, William Babikow, Benjamin F. Parlett, Edward Seabold and William H. Fuller.

Hiss's Church has a membership of about one hundred and has a large and flourishing Sunday School, of which Mr. R. H. Blackburn is Superintendent. Rev. Joseph P. Wilson is completing his fifth year as Senior Pastor of the Circuit. The Junior Pastor is the Rev. Sidney J. Sarver."

The congregation promptly paid for the construction. By the year 1897 only \$807 remained on the debt and that was erased by September 1901. The prompt payment of the

debt is particularly noteworthy when repair bills resulting from damage done by an 1896 fall storm are added. Quite different from the parsonage debt!

Hiss membership considered the needs of their animals too. In 1908 Hiss Church paid \$375 to build sheds for protecting worshippers' horses and carriages. Then, as a part of another expansion project, these same sheds were enclosed in 1924 and electricity installed in order to create Sunday School rooms. This work was done mostly in the evenings by the men with the women serving coffee and buns.

With the financial solvency that often accompanies growth, the Hiss people were beginning to feel they could support their own pastor. In 1922, Hiss asked to become a separate charge, no longer attached to Great Falls Circuit. The Baltimore Annual Conference of 1922 agreed with the request and authorized the independence.

But still, Hiss had not enough room. In 1930 a committee of three, Mr. Harry Huether, Mrs. Hambury and Mr. Morris Benson, was appointed to raise money for a new building. By early spring 1937 construction started on the brick Sunday School and Social Hall and on October 30 of that same year the building was dedicated. Total cost was \$32,000 which was fully paid by June, 1943. But Hiss was a long way from completing its expansion.

Then came World War II and many young men and women left for war and the defense of all those values held dear. There were jobs for the home folk too, Air Raid Wardens, Red Cross Volunteers, saving kitchen grease for the manufacture of explosives and the scrap metal collections. People looked more and more to God.

When the war ended Hiss found itself unable to adequately contain the congregation. In 1946, Mr. William H. King, Sunday School Superintendent reported more than 600 students enrolled in the Sunday School and more than 60 teachers. Average attendance was 321. At that time plans were being made for additional building space and there was already \$20,000 on hand to begin construction of new facilities. By 1947 membership passed the 1,000 mark.

Then in October, 1947, at a special meeting of the Quarterly Conference, a three stage building plan was announced; first, a 40 foot X 70 foot building south of the Chapel to house the Sunday School Intermediates and Juniors; second, a new sanctuary and third, a new Sunday School building.

By 1948 there was an average of 411 scholars attending Sunday School each week. Two classes were held in the kitchen and two classes were held in the hall outside the Chapel. Room was desperately needed. So in November, 1948, the congregation voted 240 to 30 to accept the three stage building plan. On Sunday, September 11, 1949, at 4:00 P.M. the ground breaking service was held for the initial stage. It is noted that on June 2, 1949, Charles Schisler died leaving his entire estate, \$16,723 after expenses, to Hiss Church. A former florist, he had worked for the Babikow family for 53 years. His life is memorialized in the Hiss Church steeple.

The new building was first used in August, 1950, and then, 3 years later on Sunday, September 20, 1953, the cornerstone for the new sanctuary was laid. A year later, October 3, 1954, the building was consecrated. Including the land, the new building cost about \$265,000. It's good the building was completed. Sunday School attendance for the four Sundays in September, 1955, were 722, 846, 961, and 1078; a total of 3,607 students and teachers!

Growth of the Hiss Sunday School is not surprising. The Church Newsletter of November, 1955, reported eight Sunday School staff members with 20 years or more service. Mr. William King, 35 years; Miss Margaret Lynch, 34 years; Mrs. Sue Shannon, 29 years; Mrs. Thelma Fishpaw, 26 years; Mrs. Florence Sollaway and Mr. T. Edward Ensor, 25 years; Mrs. Hattie Little, 23 years and Mrs. Ione Larsen, 20 years. There were ten others listed with dedicated service from ten to twenty years. Again Hiss did not have enough room.

By 1956 many Sundays had over 1,000 students in Sunday School; Classes were being held in the kitchen, halls and offices. The third stage of the 1947 plan was soon to be implemented. A lengthy report was filed in February, 1957, by the building committee, Robert Bounds, Chairman, and Howard Cantwell, Secretary. The proposal listed advantages and disadvantages of the planned building. Should it be next to the new sanctuary or in place of the frame church? In January, 1958, the Official Board unanimously announced their decision. The new educational building would be at the site of the frame church. What was apparently overlooked was the fact that the second gift of William Hiss, a one—half acre site in 1850 provided for a school on that half acre. Thus an old wish became fulfilled, although probably not intentionally.

By the late 1950's the total budget for Hiss was still less than \$100,000, even with all the building. In 1958 the budget was \$92,535 of which \$30,587 was for current expenses, \$53,608 was for the building fund and the remainder, \$8,340, covered all benevolences and world service.

The new Sunday School building was then begun on May 31, 1959, at the ground breaking service and in September, 1960, the new Sunday School was consecrated, 110 years after Hiss' gift of the land. Total cost of the project-was \$210,000. Then in 1967 a new parsonage on Delpha Court was purchased for \$30,000.

January 2, 1977, was another eventful day for Hiss. The final mortgage was symbolically burned during services in the sanctuary.



### Chapter 3 The Stone Parsonage

The old stone parsonage on the Baltimore and Harford Turnpike Road, long an unintentional source of aggravation to Great Falls, did not come into being easily nor quickly. It took the work of many men, some dedicated and some not so dedicated, individually and in committee, and many hours of making plans which were from time to time rejected for lack of funds or other reasons, to eventually bring the parsonage into being. In 1812, the action to split Great Falls Circuit created the need for a new home for the married preachers of Great Falls. The old Circuit had built a new house from the proceeds obtained from the sale of the former parsonage, five years prior to the Circuit division and that parsonage was now located within the bounds of the newly formed Hereford Circuit. Great Falls Circuit, a circuit which had a reputation of maintaining a parsonage for its married preachers, changing the location from time to time in order to provide different neighborhoods with the parsonage influence, was without a dwelling of its own.

Since the new Preacher-in-Charge, Rev. Richard Brown, together with his six children and Mrs. Brown, had now joined Great Falls, it was important that a new parsonage be secured quickly. At the First Quarterly Conference, April 1843, the Stewards of the Circuit were directed to attend the forth-coming Quarterly Conference of the new Hereford Circuit in order to present a claim for the share of Hereford's parsonage property presumably belonging to Great Falls. The minutes of that meeting state:

"...Great Falls Circuit is desirous of procuring a parsonage as early as possible. Great Falls Circuit is relying on the funds (its own share) invested in the Hereford Parsonage and Whereas We Entertain the warmest regard for and the highest opinion of the honor, intelligence and piety of our Brethren of Hereford Circuit believing that they will not only perceive our claim, but also take pleasure in adjusting the same; Committee authorized and empowered to request Hereford to appoint a similar committee to meet jointly to confer on an equiable (sic) and righteous (sic) division of the parsonage property. Further resolved that if Hereford appoints such a committee with the same authority as Great Falls Circuit, the settlement agreed to in joint committee shall be obligatory and satisfactory to the Quarterly Meeting Conference of Great Falls Circuit."

Subsequent to this April meeting, the Quarterly Conference of Great Falls met at a special meeting or Adjourned Quarterly Conference, on August 30, 1843, in order to discuss the parsonage problem. At this meeting, upon motion by Patrick Lynch, it was unanimously resolved that Rev. Richard Brown, John Buck of B. and Robert L. Hall be a committee to nominate trustees for the proposed new parsonage property. The Committee removed themselves from the main body of the Conference and after deliberating some fifteen minutes, returned with recommendations. Rev. Brown made some introductory, unrecorded remarks concerning the nominations and the importance of the work to be undertaken by the parsonage committee. Nine trustees, each elected separately and unanimously, included John Buck of B., Robert L. Hail, Joshua H. Dulaney, William

MoCubbin, James Brian (Bryan?), Nicholas Gatch, Patrick Lynch of (?), Thomas Gale and Dr. Washington Wilson.

The location of the parsonage was of great importance to each of the various appointments on the Circuit and, equally important was consideration to the Pastor. During this period of our history the church commanded a measure of respect throughout the entire community and the presence of a parsonage gave a certain prestige to a neighborhood. Each neighborhood therefore wanted the parsonage close by. Too, the parsonage should be easily accessible to all the members on the Circuit although time would eventually show that the large majority of the members on the Circuit did not take advantage of this accessibility. At the same time it should provide for the needs of the pastor and his family, the pastor being frequently away from the parsonage on preaching and/or evangelistic missions. It was a serious problem and much discussion took place in an effort to choose between a rural or urban location. Locating within the city would make more conveniences and comforts available to the pastor and especially to his family. However, the parsonage would be further away from most of the appointments and travel was certainly a factor to be considered. It was very likely, nevertheless, that an existing house could be found in either area, at reasonable cost suitable to the needs of the Circuit.

The issue at hand, according to the minutes, was whether or not the Trustees should locate the property "within the bounds of the circuit but excluding Baltimore City or "in some suitable place in the city of Baltimore. Perhaps some of the former Pastors initiated the city-country issue, remembering that the former parsonage was rural. They may have had an inkling of the trouble that would eventually beset the Great Falls parsonage. Discussion raged for some time and when the question was called for on the motion to locate outside the city, only two of the members of the Quarterly Conference voted in favor, William Kinghorn and Henry Reese. The motion was defeated and a new motion was made and seconded that the parsonage be located within the city, the actual site to be designated by the Trustees. This motion carried.

When all consideration about the location had concluded, the Meeting set itself to determine a reasonable value of its own share of the old parsonage now located within Hereford Circuit. It had always been understood that unlike other church property, the parsonage was owned by the entire Circuit, collectively, not by a single Appointment or neighborhood alone. Rev. Richard Brown was keenly interested in the parsonage situation, and he promptly petitioned the conference that he be allowed to act as agent for the Circuit in all matters pertaining to the raising of funds for the new parsonage. Rev. Brown was given that authority, and three men, Charles B. Gorsuch, Edward Gorsuch and Samuel Worthington were appointed to settle the parsonage debt with Hereford Circuit, \$350.00 being the agreed worth. This amount was determined by Great Falls alone, without consultation with Hereford Circuit. Most assuredly in the minds of the members of the Quarterly Conference that day, and certainly a problem to be reckoned with throughout the new Circuit, was the raising of the rest of the money for the new house.

That was in the summer of 1843. Winter was soon upon the Circuit and with it the accompanying horrid weather which customarily closed many of the Sunday Schools. Income had been running behind expenditures for the past two years. Resolution after resolution after resolution was passed urging the "Stewards and Preachers both itinerant and local" to do all in their power to "raise the necessary monies in order to sustain the honor of the Circuit." Hiss Chapel and Asbury School House, two new appointments, had joined the Circuit during these trying times. One item, of some salvation to the Circuit came from the dedication of Rev. Brown himself, when, at the conclusion of the conference year, he made no claim for house rent which he was allowed to do since the Circuit had not provided him with living quarters. Planning for the new parsonage property fell into limbo with only two brief references in the conference minutes until 1847.

The first of the two intermediate references occurred in February 1845, when Rev. Richard Brown was requested by the Quarterly Conference to draft a bill to be presented to the General Assembly of Maryland to incorporate the Board of Trustees for the Parsonage, but the intended incorporation apparently failed to materialize at that time. In April, 1845, the second reference appeared when the new Senior Pastor, Rev. Jacob Larkin, was "appointed and authorized" to present the case of Great Falls Circuit to the Quarterly Meeting of Hereford Circuit and to receive the money due from Hereford Circuit on the old parsonage. Apparently no money was collected at that time. During 1845 and 1846 income failed to match budgeted amounts and the Preachers went without receiving the entire amount of their budgeted wages.

By the time of the Second Quarterly Meeting, August 7, 1847, the Board of Trustees for the new parsonage had been dissolved and a resolution creating a new board was passed. Five of the original board were elected, John Buck of B., William McCubbin, Nicholas Gatch, Patrick Lynch and Doctor Wilson along with four new board members, William Hiss, James Fowler, William Kinghorn and Charles Riddle. This new board was elected without the restraints as to location imposed on the former Trustees. It was then moved and seconded that the Board of Stewards, with the aid of the Presiding Elder and the Circuit Preachers, act as a committee to raise the fund required to build a parsonage. With this new board now empowered to build, armed with faith and the prospect of receiving money from the Hereford Circuit and several individuals, the dreams of the new parsonage had a real chance for fulfillment. William Hiss made his influence felt immediately.

The Conine-Purviance partnership from which Hiss had purchased the Hiss Chapel land still had parcels available in this same area. One tract was on the Baltimore and Harford Turnpike Road opposite the intersection with a road now named Putty Hill Avenue. The toll house was across the street and the Bosley Stage, Line which traveled from Long Green to the Star Hotel at Front and Low Streets in Baltimore City ran by. A large grove of young chestnut trees stood along the southern edge of the lot and the new public school was only a block away. In addition, the site was, easily accessible from any appointment on the circuit so the site appeared to be suitable. Hiss' land dealing experience plus the apparent affection for the Church by the Conine-Purviance

partnership led to the final purchase of the five acre tract for \$45.00 on October 7, 1847, two months to the day from the date the Trustees were elected. The accepted price for such rural lands in the area was usually about \$30.00 per acre rather than the \$9.00 paid by the Trustees. By Third Quarterly Conference, October 30, 1847, \$714.00 had been pledged toward the building of the parsonage. Five of the Trustees had been active at their respective appointments and announced pledges of \$364.00. John Buck of B., \$34.00; Doctor Wilson \$42.00; Patrick Lynch \$70.00 and William Hiss \$122.00. The remaining \$350.00 was the share expected from Hereford Circuit on the old parsonage. With the land secured and sufficient pledges in hand to begin construction, the Conference directed the Stewards to superintend the building for the new parsonage. It was at this Conference also that directions were given that would cause the building to endure for more than a century. The Great Falls Circuit would have a magnificent new parsonage, "built of stone," the same type of stone as the Hiss Chapel.

Construction started immediately with Richard McDonnell as the contractor and at least sixteen other individuals or partnerships supplying various materials or skills of one trade or another. The total cost of the new parsonage, which was completed by June, 1849, was \$2,848.65 of which \$1,110.50 was paid during construction or soon thereafter. Total cost of furnishings is unknown, however, \$20.00 was still outstanding when construction was complete. Great Falls now had their long awaited parsonage, the Baltimore and Harford Turnpike had a new landmark, and the Senior pastor, Rev. Robert Caddell, had a new home.

But the new parsonage was not without problems. Income for the pastors claims was again not met during the conference year ending January 1849. The new parsonage was in debt to the amount of \$1,735.15. Therefore on June 2, 1849 at the First Quarterly Meeting the Trustees for the parsonage property urged all members of the Quarterly Conference to "raise by August 1, 1849 as large a sum as possible for the liquidation of the parsonage debt." Even though a plan for elimination of the debt was adopted on September 1, 1849 apparently little or no money was raised for this cause until Rev. William H. Chapman began working toward this goal in May or June 1850. In January, 1850, Brothers J. H. Kirwan, Gambrill and V. Gorsuch were appointed as a committee to investigate all matters pertaining to the building of the Parsonage. The Committee set to work promptly but soon found to their dismay that all bills connected with the construction had not yet been submitted. This failure to submit invoices was reported to the Quarterly Conference in May 1850, one year after completion of the building! As a result, the Committee was not prepared to report and was dismissed with the customary vote of thanks.

Rev. William H. Chapman, the new junior preacher, had more than likely heard of the new Parsonage prior to joining Great Falls, and had become interested, Because of his expressed interest, Chapman was appointed, along with James Fowler and Ishmael Day, to a new investigating committee on May 18, 1850. At that time Rev. Chapman promptly outlined his plan for the liquidation of this long due debt, a plan that included a solicitation of Hereford Circuit. Up to this time Hereford had paid \$168.50 of an anticipated \$350.00. Rev. Chapman was granted leave by the conference to attend to his

plan and when conference dismissal came, Chapman left to tour the various appointments of the Hereford Circuit. The summer passed and when the Second Quarterly Conference was held on August 26, 1850, the committee filed its report. It said:

"1st That they have carefully examined the account placed in their hands, which they believe to be the entire accounts of the parsonage and found them perfectly correct so far as calculation was concerned, but regard many of the charges included in several of the bills somewhat extravagant.

2nd That so far as they have been able to judge from the accounts which have been properly inspected the true indebtedness of the Circuit, growing out of the Parsonage being the amount solely due on and for said Parsonage is \$1,755.15 of which amount \$1,735.15 is due on the house and \$20.00 on the furniture in said house.

The Committee beg leave also to say:

3rd That they regard the thanks of the Quarterly Conference due, to Doctor Hiss and the Building Committee for the anxiety manifested-the labor and attention given during the execution of the Parsonage.

4th The Committee for the convenience of the Quarterly Conference, who may desire to review the affair of the Parsonage have prepared a statement which accompanies the report. All of which they beg leave to present.

(Signed) James Fowler-Chairman  
William H. Chapman  
Ishmael Day

The report, dated July 20, 1850, itemized the charges made against the parsonage totaling \$2,845.65 which itself was in error by \$3.00. Contributions from the various Appointments totaled \$1,110.50. Hiss Chapel contributed \$195.65 and William Hiss personally donated \$200.00. The balance due on the Parsonage then was \$1,735.15; of this amount, \$1,727.30 was owed to the contractor, Richard McDonnell who held two notes for that amount, and \$7.85 to David German. Twenty dollars was still outstanding on the parsonage furniture.

All was quiet at the Conference Meeting; there was no money and the debt should have been paid. There was little prospect of receiving the necessary funds to absolve the parsonage from debt, and murmurings began among the various members. Perhaps the new and prestigious Parsonage would have to be sold in order to pay the debt. Dreams, plans and the accomplishment of the past seven years were about to vanish. It was a sad moment.

Rev. Chapman then rose to his feet and in a commanding voice he announced to the assembly that during the past three months he personally had secured contributions or

pledges of contributions, totaling \$900.00, more than half the required amount to free the Parsonage from debt! When the Hallelujahs subsided, Brother Chapman received a vote of gratitude "for the kindness and energy exhibited in the cause of the Parsonage." No time was lost in passing a motion "to the effect that we retain the parsonage-regarding the subscription of Brother Chapman as sufficient to encourage the belief of the final payment of the debt and to continue to solicit contributions to secure the above object as soon as possible."

The Parsonage was secure, at least for the time being. The parishioners must have felt complacent and relied on the assumption that with the pledges obtained by Rev. Chapman, no further individual work on their part was necessary. How wrong this assumption was! At the Fourth Quarterly Conference of February 21, 1852, at Hiss Chapel the members were shocked to learn that the parsonage was still in debt to the amount of \$1,000. Only the appointments at Fork and Orem had paid their apportionments. In the case of Orem's share, it had been paid in full "by Samuel Wilkerson out of his pocket." Hiss Chapel reported receiving subscriptions in excess of their share but no cash had yet been received.

Years again slipped by and by 1854 the parsonage began to need some repairs, albeit minor ones. In that year the Parsonage Committee paid out \$100.00 for new furniture, for clearing additional land and for plowing of a garden. If the Circuit couldn't pay the preacher, at least now the man and his family could grow some of their own food. An additional \$3.78 was spent for repairs to the building. In 1856 it was reported that \$15.00 was received and applied to the parsonage debt. At the Fourth Quarterly Conference of January 17, 1857, at Hiss Chapel, a committee of three, P.B. Reese, William Hiss and John Shanklin were appointed to investigate and adjust the balance on the long due debt. There had again been some repairs or possibly some alterations to the parsonage during the past quarter as one E. J. Church submitted a bill in the amount of \$9.04 for lumber which was used at the parsonage.

In August, 1861, Rev. Joseph Spangler startled the Quarterly Conference when he presented a claim from the estate of the late William Hiss, in the amount of \$130.00, against the parsonage property. This same claim was presented and discussed during Quarterly Conferences in November, 1862; in August 1863; in November 1863 (the claim was now \$131.00); and the last reference to the claim was in January 1864. Neither the reason for the claim nor the final disposition of the claim has been discovered. But the worst of the parsonage situation was yet to come.

The second division of Great Falls Circuit, in 1864, created Long Green Circuit and put the circuit into a similar situation as in 1842, only this time Great Falls had the parsonage and owed a debt to Long Green. A committee from Long Green presented its claim on the Parsonage to Great Falls at the First Quarterly Conference of May 14, 1864. However, the Conference voted to defer any action on the claim until a later date. The Conference did pay a few bills of the parsonage at that meeting; a new cooking stove, \$25.00; two pairs of window shades and fixtures for the parlor, \$10.00; and a trundle bedstead, \$2.70.

Meanwhile, as the property division was still in dispute, Rev. Francis Macartney, in an effort to get action on necessary repairs to the building, proceeded on his own authority and ordered some of the work done. The following year, in November, 1864, the senior pastor who replaced Rev. Macartney, Rev. David Shoaff, presented Macartney's bill to the Conference. Rev. Macartney's claim for "building a cistern and other improvements at the parsonage" was for the amount of \$40.50. The Conference refused to honor the total bill and ordered that two-thirds, or \$27.00, be Apportioned among the different appointments. By January, 1865, the total amount was collected (\$27.00) and offered to Rev. Macartney as payment in full. The payment was accepted, but this was not to be the last time that the preachers would be required to conduct the parsonage business themselves.

A committee of four men was established in August, 1864 to consider the claim of Long Green for both the parsonage share and a share of the Circuit's campground property. The men appointed from Great Falls were Brothers Pinkerton, Asher, Shanklin and P. Lynch. These men, together with a similar committee from Long Green, were to determine the probable worth of the two properties and make a recommendation for an equitable division at the next Quarterly Conference. For reasons unknown, this committee failed to reach a settlement and nearly two years later on May 26, 1866, a new committee was established in an effort to resolve the dispute. Brothers Gorsuch, Blackburn and Naylor were directed to again meet with a similar committee of three from Long Green and jointly select a seventh member. Although this group filed a report at the next Quarterly Conference, they were unable to reach agreement on the property settlement.

In October, 1866, in an attempt to settle the property claims, Brother Pinkerton moved that "the Trustees of the Parsonage property be requested to sell the same at the earliest advantageous (price) and offer and pay one third of the proceeds thereof to Long Green Circuit." This motion was adopted to the dismay of many members of the Circuit. There was still interest in retaining the parsonage, for at the Fourth Quarterly Conference Meeting, the Parsonage Committee, consisting of five women on the Circuit, Christianna Hiss, Elizabeth Lee Hiss, Eliza Plaskitt, Rebecca Slade and Mary Penn, was directed to refurbish the parsonage and make the necessary preparations to welcome the new senior pastor, Rev. M. L. Smyser. Yet, the Parsonage Committee was directed by the First Quarterly Conference the following Conference Year, to sell the building for at least \$3,000.00. Further, if it could not be sold at that figure, the Committee was to rent it.

Opposition to the proposed sale mounted among the members of the Circuit. The Parsonage Committee, feeling its moral obligation to the various members of the Circuit, but realizing its position as a part of the Quarterly Conference, asked for further instructions, not wishing to act on its own authority. The Conference again directed the Parsonage Committee to sell the building for \$3,000.00 or more. But the Committee retained their one trump card. That was the permission to rent the building if no sale was made. In October, 1867, the parsonage was rented, by action of Thomas Gorsuch, to one "Dr. Scarborough at \$150.00 per year, payable in advance." The parsonage remained

rented until 1869 when a settlement must have finally been reached with Long Green Circuit on both the parsonage and campground properties.

The addition of the four upper county appointments to Long Green in 1869 forced the property settlement. Full details of that settlement cannot be located; however, it is known that the campground property was sold for \$45.00 per acre. No money was paid to Long Green from the proceeds of the sale. It is possible that the furniture division was the entire settlement agreed to, since the parsonage construction debt had not yet been fully paid and Great Falls was to assume the entire debt. A portion of the proceeds, \$150.00, from the campground sale was applied to the purchase of new furniture for the parsonage. The parsonage was again to be used by the senior pastor and Rev. B. F. Clarkson filed this inventory upon moving into the parsonage:

"on moving into, the Parsonage in the Spring of 1869, I found the following articles of Parsonage furniture, the Circuit had been divided at the Conference held in Washington, D. C. March, 1869 and before my coming to the Parsonage the furniture had been divided. The following came into the possession of Great Falls Circuit:

- 1 Wood Stove for Parlor or Bed-chamber
- 1 large bureau
- 1 wardrobe
- 1 oil cloth covered lounge
- 4 cane seat chairs
- 4 kitchen chairs (worthless)
- 1 arm chair (broken)
- 1 kitchen table
- 1 old bedstead
- 1 writing table with bookshelves
- 1 wash stand
- 1 lamp stand
- 2 husk mattress
- 2 iron chimney closers
- 3 joints old stove pipe
- 4 buff window curtains
- 1 old axe (worthless)"

As a footnote to the report the transcriber added "he also reports a long list of furniture, kitchen items, new stove and curtains, etc. bought after his joining the Circuit." In all, between \$500 and \$600 was spent to refurnish the parsonage which was completely paid by 1871.

During 1871, Rev. J. G. Moore took the matter of the parsonage upkeep into his own hands. Some of the fencing around the parsonage lot was in such a deplorable condition that it was not worth saving but required rebuilding. And that is what he did: At the Fourth Quarterly Conference Rev. Moore reported that a new fence had been erected



around the parsonage garden and across the front of the lot. The preacher did all of the hauling himself in connection with the fence construction and made no claim on the bill for this work. Some of the old materials were salvaged and incorporated into another section of fence. The bill submitted read:

Bill for Fence

60 posts at 0.10	\$ 6.00
Bill of sawing pails	12.00
Bro. Naylor for 60 panels at 0.33-1/3	20.00
Bro. Naylor setting large Gate Posts	2.50
Bro. Fowler for timber for pails	6.00
Bro. Hiss for 250 rails at 0.05	12.50
Nails for garden fence	2.00
Hinges and hang gate	2.00
Bro. Naylor for large gate	4.00
	<u>\$ 67.00</u>
Paid for cutting timber	<u>3.00</u>
	\$ 70.00

Additionally the bill included some charges for unidentified new furniture which brought the total bill to \$77.66. When Rev. Moore turned in the bill it was already marked as paid in full. The pastor considered this work his contribution to the welfare of the Circuit. He "gave it to the society to cover wear and tear at the Parsonage."

At the same meeting, after receiving \$20.00 from the Gatch Appointment toward the parsonage fund, it was reported that only \$20.00 remained on the parsonage debt and that the conference "should like some action on that." The necessary \$20.00 was raised immediately from among the members present and the cash turned over to the Preacher-in-Charge. After 22 years, the parsonage was free from debt!

There were still pressures being applied to the Quarterly Conference from some of the members to sell the parsonage. For a quarter of a century, the parsonage had not been moved and other neighborhoods were becoming anxious to have the preachers live in their midst. Major repairs would soon be required and perhaps it would be better to build anew rather than repair. A committee was established sometime in late 1876 or early 1877, to investigate the prospect of selling the building. The first report, April 21, 1877, was against the sale. By July of that same year, pressures from the southern and eastern parts of the circuit were strong enough to force a vote on the issue as provided for in the deed. The vote, which reflected geographical location (except Orem's) was as follows:

Patapsco	8 for the sale	0 against
Orems	1	6
Ebenezer	8	3
Furnace	1	4
Hiss	0	12

Gatch	0	8
Camp Chapel	<u>0</u>	<u>7</u>
	18	40

The parsonage was beginning to show its age and extensive repairs were undertaken in 1883. Rev. W. Case reported that in addition to his regular preaching, funerals, visits and other pastoral duties, he also has "done a good deal of bodily labor in helping to improve the parsonage which cost nearly \$400.00. By the year 1856 the first of a series of water problems struck. The well had gone dry and a committee of three, David H. Kenny, William Wilkerson and Howard German, was set up to provide water to the parsonage. Hopefully, the work would not exceed \$150.00 but investigations soon proved that this sum was insufficient. Temporary measures costing only \$24.60 were undertaken. Water problems were again discussed in 1891 and a new committee was appointed to attend to digging a new well. Those on the committee were Rev. Joseph Wilson, Thomas Gorsuch, Robert Blackburn, Charles Akehurst and David Kenny. This new committee reported at the First Quarterly Conference May 9, 1892.

After listening to the report, Brother Sheridan made a motion that the Conference proceed with the new well and the cost be proportioned among the various appointments on the Circuit. The cost of this work was to be \$193.00 of which \$53.00 was apportioned to Hiss Chapel. All money was collected and the bill paid for the new well and pump by January 1894 and the committee was discharged with thanks.

Remember that the parsonage had cost \$2,848.65 to build in 1849. During the years 1889 - 1906 about two-thirds of the cost of the original building was spent on repairs and alterations. It is of little wonder why many members on the Circuit wanted a new parsonage. Although all of the details of the parsonage repairs are lacking, in May of 1899 it was reported by the senior pastor, Rev. Thomas S. Long, that "the parsonage received much needed repairs" and the junior pastor, Rev. A. N. Edwards, reported that he personally had "visited several of the aid societies (Ladies Aid Societies) in the interest of the Parsonage improvements, securing through their kindness \$190.00 for same."

Also at that meeting, the Parsonage Trustees, Thomas Gorsuch, James M. Gillespie, Sr., F. H. Milburn, William Porter, Alexander McCormick, John. A. Sheridan, William White, James Francis and W. S. Treadwell, reported on the failing condition of the new well, and the dilapidated condition of the stable. The Quarterly Conference then directed the Trustees to sink an artesian well as the first priority and after that was obtained, the Trustees should proceed to replace the stable at reasonable expense.

By August, 1899, most of the work had been completed and a majority of the charges had been paid. There was one note in the amount of \$200.00 still outstanding, but that was to be paid within four months. Mr. Grauer was also given a note due in ninety days for the lumber which he had supplied for the improvements.

During the pastorate of Rev. Frank R. Isaac, additional repairs to the Parsonage became necessary. True, the exterior seemed pleasant enough. The grove of large chestnut trees supplied enough nuts for the parsonage to enjoy from one season to the next, the "wax-heart" cherry tree by the kitchen provided delicious fruit each June, the large vegetable garden was flourishing and the circular flower bed of cannas, scarlet sage and coleus in the center of the entrance walk made a pleasing sight. Still the Parsonage required attention and Rev. Isaac filed this report at the Second Quarterly Conference, September 14, 1902:

I desire to call the attention of the entire Circuit to the matter of caring for the parsonage. Nearly all of the Appointments seem greatly interested in the matter but there are, some sorry to say, a few who are disinclined to improvements at this point. The property there is the possession of the Circuit as a whole in which each Appointment should feel equally interested. It is indeed not a matter of ancient history when this property was so out of repair to be almost incapable of comfort or convenience to its inmates and that through the persistent and generous efforts of those in charge of the affairs the property was improved at a cost of nearly \$1,000. To ignore the necessities as they fall due means that in a few years only a repetition of five years ago will be upon you; whereas, if these demands are met from year to year, the amounts necessary will be smaller and therefore easier paid and the occupants of the Parsonage will be made comfortable and your property always in good repairs. It has been my aim to keep the property in such a condition as to have it a matter of pride to each person who is in any way connected with the work even they visit the Parsonage. I am sure that if there were an annual visit made to the Parsonage by a majority of the members of the Circuit they would take more interest in the appearance of things and the inmates of the Parsonage be made to rejoice. Some of the members do not know where the Parsonage is or what its appearance, interior or exterior, is in keeping your property the most attractive on the Harford Road.

Prior to making this report, Rev. Isaac had entertained the Parsonage Trustees and Stewards at the Parsonage and had them inspect the property. However, the men must not have been convinced of the poor conditions and after listening to the report the only action taken was to have a telephone installed. Sickness invaded the Community and the Parsonage during the next half year which isolated the Parsonage from the Circuit for a time. Typhoid fever and that "dreaded disease - Scarlet Fever" which had afflicted the pastor's daughter, Elizabeth, were widespread over the Circuit. Sickness and the accompanying quarantines, quickly followed by another effort to divide the circuit in 1904, left the needed repairs forgotten and undone.

By the year 1906, an estimate for repairs to the Parsonage property in the amount of \$726.25 was received by the Ladies Aid Society at Hiss. The Conference voted to have the work done and assess each of the Appointments \$100.00. Ebenezer balked and built

its own parsonage in 1908 and from that time forward made no contributions towards maintenance of the Harford Road Parsonage.

A property settlement with the new Chase Circuit created from Great Falls in 1916, gave two and one half acres of the parsonage land to Chase as its share of the parsonage property. The congregation of Hiss Church paid Great Falls Circuit \$2,000.00 for the parsonage property in 1923. It seemed a reasonable settlement at that time, Hiss having retained the Circuit senior pastor, Rev. George W. Evans, as its own pastor upon the creation of Hiss as a separate charge in 1922. On November 25, 1924, the old stone parsonage passed from ownership by the people of Hiss Church. Never again would the great stone house shelter or frustrate the married preachers of Great Falls Circuit. Dr. Geary S. Long purchased the parsonage and the remaining 1.84 acres of land for \$11,000.00. But Hiss was to make one final grasp at the old house. The C. Howard Amoss family, long stalwarts of the Hiss congregation, rented the property from Dr. Long, and the Amoss family lived there until the property was again sold in 1949.

Then in 1980, the old house was torn down in order to expand a parking lot. Many persons watched the demolition with sadness.

## Chapter 4 A Personal Touch

The church served the community as a social center in the first half of the 1900's. There was the annual Strawberry Festival; the Sunday School picnic, the most notable being the one in July, 1929, when five busloads went to Bay Shore Park; the yearly two day summer carnival; the annual Oyster Supper and the Christmas and Easter entertainments, the latter two events always included boxes of candy for the children. There were repeated attendance and achievement contests in the Sunday School with the losers providing entertainment and/or refreshments for the winners.

In 1946, Mr. and Mrs. Stephan Byan, Mrs. Vivian McIntosh and Mrs. Isabelle Reier accompanied 40 young people from Hiss on a moonlight strawride to Rocks, Maryland. It took two trucks to transport the group (and the hot dogs and marshmallows) for the evening. It was during the same year when, under the direction of Mrs. Sue Shannon, the WSCS bought a heifer to send abroad for European relief and the Sunday School "adopted" two Nigerian children. In 1947 Margaret Frances Brooks and C. Howard Amoss celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. They had been married on February 22, 1887, 8:00 P.M. at Gatch Methodist Church.

There was a little remembered, perhaps, meeting in May of 1948 that signified the coming of an era that would have an everlasting effect on all churches. It has been said many times that television has ended the role of the church as a social center. Mrs. Pauline Schaffer hosted a meeting of the WCTU in her home that month and during refreshments she turned on the television set. It was reported that it was greatly enjoyed!

Then on May 15, 1949, the WCTU held a service in the Towson jail. Mr. Abells "gave a heart searching talk," Mrs. Leslie R. McCorkle and Mrs. Isabelle Reier each sang a solo during the service. In keeping with the old Hiss revival spirit, four prisoners accepted Jesus that day.

But the good fortune of the Hiss congregation did have its momentary lapses. It seems that the great number of people passing through the buildings for meetings and worship sometimes had their minds on other things. A display was set up in the hall beneath the sanctuary on Sunday, December 9 and 16, 1956. The display contained no less than 111 articles that had been left at the church including a lady's winter coat and 8 other ladies outer garments. Mrs. Charles Schek must have wondered why some women weren't cold as she catalogued the articles.

There are many other personal stories here too. Aubrey Burton's grandfather, a truck farmer, stopping by the church and building fires in the two wood stoves every Saturday night in winter after returning from market in the City so the worshippers would be warm on Sunday. The young son of our senior pastor, Rev. Frank R. Isaac, fearing for his life when he thought hell's fire was after him. This feeling occurred as he watched Baltimore City burn, in February, 1904, from his bedroom window in the old stone parsonage. Mr. William Ehrhardt always supplying the 25 to 30 gallons of oysters and Mrs. George Grammer always supplying the ice cream for the oyster suppers during the

1920's and into the 1930's. The Babikow's inviting the Sunday School to their shore, for a day and selling soft drinks and ice cream, the proceeds going toward the brick Sunday School building. Mr. C. Howard Amoss providing ice cream for the countless picnics, carnivals and Sunday School board meetings. And the chicken supper served in the home of Mrs. Hambury where alone she raised \$33.00 for the Building Fund in 1931. There was a time during the depression when the church helped families of the community who were in need by offering cash to them. And the bus fare paid for the boy who walked from Parkville to Towson for school and for another boy who walked to Perry Hall for his schooling. There was Mr. William King admonishing certain children for stopping at the store on Sunday mornings and spending their Sunday School offering money. Then there was the decision to mark present at Sunday School, two little girls who missed on January 31, 1932, because they had no shoes. It was reported that the sisters really cried, not because they had no shoes, but because they could not attend. Many recall the activity of Mrs. Pauline Schaffer, among many others, and the Hiss sponsorship of the family from Holland in 1963. And there was the 100th birthday party for Samuel S. Tagg in December 1959.

Then, during the 1970's, Hiss made great strides in its transition from a congregation still clinging to its former rural image, to a large urban church, more aware of its true purpose. More and more emphasis began to be placed on world affairs and social concerns. Early in the 1960's the membership had passed the 2,000 mark and in 1959 the annual budget exceeded \$100,000 for the first time. Deborah Circle of the WSCS led the way in 1958 toward awareness when it announced that they would operate on pledges alone. No more home shampoo parties, no more selling aprons, dish cloths, nylon pocket books or greeting cards and no more saving box tops. The Circle would operate solely on the charity of its members.

So in the 1970's a FISH chapter was organized under the direction of Vesta Dickey. Under the guidance of Alma and Donald Hale, Hiss assumed a portion of the operation of Manna House, a soup kitchen for destitute Baltimore street people. Both of these endeavors flourish today and the Hiss young people contribute heavily in time to Manna House. There was the great debate held at Hiss on amnesty for the Viet Nam draft dodgers. There was a flourishing fellowship club and repeated family weekend camping experiences. All of these events have contributed to a slowly changing attitude among the members.

Today, in 1982, Hiss is a complex of four fine buildings and a parsonage, totally debt free. These things are visible reminders of what went before. But there are other stories of heroes and heroines in our past, other acts of charity and faith. The creations and events of the past can only be reflected upon and remembered by the present. Our lives in the present can only influence the future. For in the future, we will be the history on which other generations reflect.

### List of Pastors

1839-40	Thomas B. Sargent Aquila A. Reese	1859	Richard Brown (3 mo.) William W. Hicks Samuel H. C. Smith
1841	John Bear Basil Barry	1860	Joseph Spangler Samuel H. C. Smith
1842	David Steele Basil Barry	1861	Joseph Spangler P. F. Eyer
1843	Richard Brown John W. Bull	1862	Francis Macartny P. F. Eyer John McKindlers
1844	Richard Brown Charles McElfrish	1863	Francis Macartny James B. Cuddy
1845	Jacob Larkin James H. March	1864	David Shoaff
1846	Jacob Larkin C. A. Reid	1865	E. Welty
1847	Samuel Keppler O. H. Tiffany (5 mo.) William H. Chapman (7 mo.)	1866	Fredrick, E. Crever
1848	Zane Bland John Bear	1867	H. L. Smyser Edward Smith
1849	Robert Cadden Samuel Cornelius, Jr.	1868	M. L. Smyser Albert E. Wallis
1850	Robert Cadden William H. Chapman	1869-70	B. F. Clarkson
1851	L. V. Blake A. L. Gibbons	1871	James G. Moore James McLaren
1852	L. V. Blake John H. Dashiell	1872	James G. Moore H. Clay Smith
1853	John H. Dashiell William J. Wilson	1873	James G. Moore G. W. Maydwell
1854	Oliver Ege Edward Kinsey	1874	H. McNemar William Robinson
1855	Oliver Ege William Elliott	1875	H. McNemar D. A. Foard
1856-57	Philip B. Reese Daniel H. Parrish	1876	H. McNemar Dorsey (6 mo.)
1858	Jon A. Munroe (3 mo.) William W. Hicks	1877	R. R. Murphy John A. Rawlings
		1878	R. R. Murphy F. W. Schriener

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1879	R. R. Murphy J. R. Pardew	1900	W. F. Roberts L. N. Ferguson
1880	E. Richardson Scharf	1901	Frank R. Isaac L. N. Ferguson
1881	E. Richardson G. W. King H. H. Westwood (6 mo.)	1902	Frank R. Isaac John N. Jefferies
1882	E. Richardson Gray	1903	Frank R. Isaac George L. Jones
1883	W. Case W. S. Wheeler	1904	Frank R. Isaac Robert J. Nicholson
1884	W. Case	1905	Frank R. Isaac Luther M. McGarvey
1885-86	J. C. Nicholson	1906	Thomas Wood Marrion W. Glasgow
1887	G. W. Heyde	1907	Jeremiah Robert Pardew A. J. Porter W. M. Hoffman
1888	John W. Hedges W. C. Brian	1908	Jeremiah Robert Pardew W. M. Hoffman
1889	John W. Hedges E. H. Lamar	1909	Harry E. R. Reck Joseph Jacob Genthner
1890	Joseph P. Wilson William H. Dell	1910-11	Harry E. R. Reck George C. Harris
1891	Joseph P. Wilson George C. Harris	1912	Harry E. R. Reck A. J. Porter
1892	Joseph P. Wilson G. W. Rice (8 mo.)	1913-16	Harry E. R. Reck
1893	Joseph P. Wilson J. W. Fleming	1917-19	M. H. Courtney
1894	Joseph P. Wilson Sidney Sarver	1920-24	George W. Evans
1895	Reuben R. Kolb W. H. Richardson	1925-29	Charles S. Biggs
1896-97	Reuben R. Kolb H. C. Grinnel	1930-37	W. F. Carey
1898	Reuben R. Kolb Richard N. Edwards	1938-41	John R. Esaias
1899	Thomas S. Long Richard N. Edwards	1942-49	Paul R. Diehl
		1950-51	Watson E. Holley
		1952-56	Clarence L. Fossett



**List of Pastors ....pg 3**

1957-62 Wm. Wesley Dodge  
1963-70 Charles E. Niner  
1971-78 C. Roger Elgert  
1979- Matthias W. Bott

**List of Associate Pastors**

1954-55 Thomas T. Stewart  
1955-56 Robert K. Smyth  
1957-60 Vern J. Munger  
1961-65 W. Edward Neighoff  
1966-67 Kenneth G. Symes  
1968-70 Byron P. Brought  
1971-73 Mark R. Sills  
1974-78 Ronald R. Runkles  
1979- William R. Wells

**List of Ministers of Visitation**

1968-76 Paul R. Diehl  
1978-82 Jack M. Croup