The Franksville Churches

In January of 1874 a group of men met in the railroad depot and decided to build a house for religious worship. One month later, on February 28, all interested persons met and agreed to form the Union Church of Franksville. The first trustees were H.B. Roberts, J. B. Morse, J. Nau, O. Forbes, E. W. Owens, W. Rogers, Y. B. Morris, J. Summerton and R. Reynolds. At that meeting 110 people agreed to pay $1,294.00 toward the building of the church. It would be called the Union Church and the general contract for approximately $1500.00 was awarded to Charles Peck. The new church was to cost $2,100.00 and all but $600 was raised by the time of dedication on October 15, 1874.

The structure was a two-story frame building and on the first floor was a large recreation room where socials and suppers were held. The church had a seating capacity of 250. Part of the Union Church's income was derived from renting its basement to community organizations. In 1875 it received between eight and ten dollars a quarter (three months) from the Grangers, the Good Templers Lodge and the Union Lodge. An evening concert in 1876, revival meetings in 1882, the Modern Woodmen Lodge (begun in 1889) and a singing school in 1891, were just a few of the groups that met in the church.

Recorded in the treasurer's book are typical expenses of the Union Church; insurance payments to Henry Roberts; three to four dollars per month to E.W. Owens for janitorial service; $4.50 to $5.50 for a cord of wood; two dollars to Jake Nau for hauling nearly 1500 feet of lumber, three dollars to E. W. Owens for digging a ditch; $27.88 to Henry Roberts for painting the church in 1882, .50c to Mr. Forbes for sawing wood and varying amounts to storekeepers Kellop, and later, Runge for lamps, lamp chimneys ($.05), oil ($.14 a gallon), broom ($.20), etc.

Sunday collections also provided church income, and, in about 1878, there apparently developed two churches within the church. The treasurer's book reports Warren Rogers bringing the monthly collection of the Congregational Church while Daniel Rork presented that of the Methodist Episcopal Church; typical collections at first ranged anywhere from $1.89 to $6.00, with $29.88 collected New Year's Eve 1884. Later, the two groups did separate and occupy their own buildings.

From the original name of the Union Church Association of Franksville the church has undergone several name changes. On June 22, 1896 the Association joined the Methodist Episcopal Church. The incorporated name to the Methodist Episcopal Church Association
of Franksville. That same year, a building fund was begun for a newly organized church.

Besides the Methodist and Congregational Churches, a Lutheran Church was at one time conducted in Franksville. In the summer of 1923 and in all of 1924, Rev. Huber of Racine bicycled to Franksville to conduct Sunday afternoon services on the George Gutknecht farm, in an old school house. The next year, services were held Sunday afternoon in the Methodist Church. Shortly after, all Lutheran Services in the area were discontinued and area Lutherans had to make the long trip to Huber's church in Racine.

On July 28, 1896, Augusta A. Ownes transferred to the church the parcel of land lying east of the church and adjoining the church property for the sum of $1. Upon this land was created a church parsonage. The parsonage was used first by Rev. Henry Johnson and other pastors thereafter until 1930. It then became rental property and remained so until 1959 when it was torn down. In 1930 the Franksville congregation joined with five other churches and were served by two pastors. After years of negotiation on the conference level, a Plan of Union was agreed upon and on May 10, 1939, the Methodist Episcopal Church, The Methodist Protestant Church South and the Methodist Protestant Church united to form the Methodist Church.

The present church was remodeled in 1955 at a cost of $42,000.00 and in 1962 a new parsonage was built approximately one-half mile east of the church on Highway K at a cost of $26,000.00. The first occupants of the new parsonage were the Rev. Paul Reinhold and family and consecration services were held on June 2, 1963.

In 1969, through a merger of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church still another name change was affected. Today the local church is known as the United Methodist Church and the pastor is Rev. Kenneth Redfearn.

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**Racine County National Bank**

The Racine County National Bank has been in existence since 1917; but to find its true beginning, we must return to the very start of this area, for it is from this hard stock and hard-working population that the bank and the area has achieved its current place in society.

"Jacques Vieau" was one of the early settlers of the Racine area. One of his sons, Jacques Jr., was the trader at Skunk Grove, the Racine Trading Post, and because the Indians slurred his name, he was often called and referred to as "Jambeau". The Jambeau Trading Post was located just southeast of Franksville along a branch of the Root River (just east of the present bridge south of Highway K). It is said that the grove was about a mile wide and two miles long.

Lucius S. Blake, a prominent citizen of early Racine and the first president of the OLD SETTLERS SOCIETY which held its tenth annual gathering at a picnic at Robert's (Skunk) Grove on June 12, 1879, wrote an interesting sketch of his first visit to Wisconsin Territory, which took place in 1835.

"In February... in company with my father and two elder brothers, C.H. and E.S. Blake, I left the Michigan Territory. In Chicago we remained a day or two to fill our wagon with supplies. Accordingly, we left on the 11th of February, 1835. The weather being somewhat cold and fearing that we might perish in the wilderness, we took a Mackinac blanket, which was to shelter four of us."

(The first night we brought up at Gross Point, 18 miles north of Chicago. Here at an Indian Trading Post, we were well cared for by the traders. Although the next day was much colder and knowing that we must of necessity lie out one night, as there was no house or settler between Gross Point and Skunk Grove where there was another trading post, we like all other western bound people, were impatient to be on our way.

"That night... we stopped in a grove about three miles west of Waukegan, and the night being very cold were compelled to stand up around the fire. About noon the next day, February 13th, we stopped to feed our team