

## MULBERRY CENTER CHURCH

### HISTORICAL FACTS

- February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1887, interested families of the Mulberry Center vicinity gathered at the Mulberry Center School House for a special meeting, under the supervision of Rev. Ebenezer Church, and organized a United Brethren Class consisting of 52 Charter Members.
- The First Class Leader was Brother J.C. Miller and he remained in that position, until he moved to Webster City.
- Church services were first held in the Mulberry Center School House located about ¼ mile south of where a church would soon be built.
- A Sunday School Class was formed and also, plans to build a church, were in progress in 1889.
- It was considered an impossibility by a majority of the people to build a new church, because they felt that a minister could barely be supported. Money was solicited from members and friends.
- Giving spiritual leadership in these formative days was –

Rev. Will Adams, Byron A. (Boy) Clark, and Rev. Ebenezer Church. (I have read where Rev. Adams and Rev. Clark were said to be only 19 years of age).

- The United Brethren society of this place are contemplating the erection of a new church building this summer. A meeting for that purpose will be called soon. (This was reported in the Webster City Freeman on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1889).
- On account of repairing and painting the Mulberry Center School house no Sunday school will be held there until after the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, 1889; but it will be at the residence of P.H. Morris.
- A Building Committee was formed, led by J.C. Miller and Mrs. Morris. According to the Freeman's July 17 1889 issue they will have a meeting at the Mulberry Center school house, next Wednesday night, to consider and talk up the church building question and location. We are going to have church anyway. There will be an ice cream festival at Mulberry Center next Thursday evening, July 18<sup>th</sup>. Everyone is invited to come and bring a basket of goodies for the table. The proceeds are to go toward paying our minister.

- J.C. Miller deeded an acre of farmland for the church to be built on and to be used by its members as long as the building was used as a church.
- The church was to be located on what was called the “four corners,” one of which was owned by J.C. Miller. And this was five miles east of Webster City on “old” Hwy. 20 and five miles north on the Stonega blacktop or R38.
- Carpenters Andrew Brewer and William McFerren, Webster City were hired to oversee the work done by the members and friends as they completed a one-room frame construction for \$950.00 including labor.
- Rocks or “niggerheads,” hauled in from neighboring farms, were used for the foundation. Records show that \$1.00 or less was often paid out for a day’s labor.
- John Thompson and Mrs. Phil Morris were the committee for soliciting funds. They raised \$525.00 and were “promised more.”
- **Webster City people were generous givers, among them are residents whose names that are still familiar to us today. The following gave \$5.00 each: J.W. Evans, L.A. McMurray, H.A. Crandall & Co., J.D. Hunter, and Charles Arthur. A.C. Swain, Lee Bros., D.D. Chase, Kamrar & Boeye, James McMurchy, B. Detlor, J.I. Burleson, J.W.**

**Allington, J.P. Clagg, S.J. Root, A.J. Brewer, J.W. Young, Louis Frank and B.F. Derr. Others gave less amounts.**

- August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1889 the Methodist Church of Webster City have presented the new U.B. Church at Mulberry Center with a very handsome pulpit. A gift that will be appreciated by the recipients.
- October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1889 the Freeman reports that a week ago Sunday Mr. Dawson preached his last sermon before the U.B. conference. Mr. Dawson is a young man of remarkable intelligence; his style is simple without being commonplace, and his manner is earnest and convincing.
- October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1889 according to the Freeman newspaper the new church is progressing finely. A. France is general superintendent of the work, and is pushing it along as rapidly as possible; they expect to get it enclosed this week. **The location was slightly changed, instead of being on France's corner, it's a little further south on J.C. Miller's land.** We are lacking in funds, yet the Webster City people responded nobly to our call. Nearly all the business men have given something. Anyone who feels interested and would like to give something, can subscribe with John Thompson or Mrs. Morris, and it will be thankfully received and your name will be put on the role of honor.

- Articles of Incorporation were filed March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1890.
- Of course, the committee encountered obstacles, as many committees will, and on March 10, 1890 an issue of the Freeman stated: “We are still lacking funds to go on with our church and everyone who has a dollar to spare for such purposes is kindly requested to contribute to our new edifice, and especially members of the congregation!” Give your subscriptions to Mrs. Phil Morris or James Miller. Give this matter your earnest attention.
- May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1890 issue of Freeman stated that the new church is so near done that services will be held in it this coming Sunday.
- **The Mulberry Center of the United Brethren in Christ Church was dedicated July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1890;** when it was filled to capacity for the dictatorial sermon given by the Rev. George Miller of Carlisle, Iowa.
- The local newspaper reported at the time “that the morning preacher’s address was of high order intellectually and spiritually. It was an effort indicating culture – of vigorous thought and sound doctrine and held the audience with eager interest to the end.”

- The indebtedness at the time of completion was nearly \$213.71, which was a lot of money in those days. However, at the close of the dedication service the congregation made an unexpected contribution that paid the deficiency.
- July 21, 1890 a new chapel organ has arrived for the Mulberry Center U.B. Church. It was purchased by John Lee at Webster City and it is a nice one.
- In August, 1912, eight women met and the Mulberry Center Helping Hand Club was organized with Nellie Campbell as first president; Rosy Miller, vice president; Bertha Hoffman, secretary; and Nellie Caquelin, treasurer.
- Those eight charger members were Ruth Berleen – Mrs. Frank Sparks, Seattle, Washington; Effie Hoffman – Mrs. Robert Moore, killed in an accident; Alta Thompson, Rt. #3, Webster City; Grace Crouch – Mrs. Emsley Dally, Holyoke, Colorado; Nellie Campbell – Mrs. Charles Carlson, Lake Crystal, Minnesota; Nellie Caquelin – Mrs. Roy Newman, and Bertha Hoffman – Mrs. Chris Linder – both deceased. The membership fee was 25 cents with a 5 cent assessment for each meeting. At a later time members paid 10 cents per meeting, and later the initial fee was finally dropped.
- The Mulberry Center Helping Hand Club had various projects: gas lights were installed in the church, they

decorated the church interior, bought new song books, pieced quilts, tied comforters, and sewed rag rugs. They even unloaded gravel for Ed Miller and shelled beans for the Campbells. The girls charged 50 cents for afternoon's work, but most people gave them a dollar. To raise more money they held bazaars, oyster suppers, ice cream socials, and box socials at the homes of members. They put on two plays at the hall at Prairie Queen, located one mile west of the church.

- In the fall of 1964, the Mulberry Center Helping Hand Club merged with the Women's Society of World Service – WSWS. When the church closed in 1991 there were 29 WSWS members.
- Through the years, the Mulberry Center Helping Hand Club ladies have contributed to a number of church improvements by having chicken suppers, bake sales, and bazaars. **The church never did have the convenience of running water.** They also packaged necessities for the needy in Zimbabwe, Africa.
- **With the union of the Evangelical Church and the United Brethren in Christ in 1946, the new denominational name became, Mulberry Center Evangelical United Brethren Church.**

- The church was raised for a basement, a side entry erected, and other improvements made in 1953. The project started under the leadership of Rev. Z. Houghan and concluded with the dedication service October 18, 1953, under the pastorate of Rev. C.W. Dehne.

Because of the need for increased space, it was decided to build a basement room, and the frame structure was lifted, moved and a full basement constructed. A side entry was added to the main structure to provide an entry way to the basement and also to accommodate as another entrance to the sanctuary of the church. The church has been repainted and a new oil-burning furnace installed. Members of the Building Committee include: Hector Butler, chairman; Mrs. Helen Anderson, Mark Berogan and Don Dinsdale. (Daily Freeman-Journal shows a picture of just a single, not double doors, on the front of the church at this time).

- In 1954 a new sidewalk was placed on the south side of the church connecting the front of the church with the new side entry. Those helping with the project were: Don Dinsdale, Harold Miller, Ray Miller, Les Nicholson, Harold Bentley, Morris Brown, Mark Berogan and Clair Dinsdale.

- A major renovation project of the chancel area was started by memorial gifts in 1958.

#### MEMORIAL GIFTS:

1. Pulpit & Chancel Chairs (1958) – In memory of Mr. & Mrs. E.D. Miller, Sr.
2. Reredos (Dossal, Dossal Oak Panel, Valance) (1958) - In memory of Mr. E.W. Miller, Jr.
3. Communion Table (1958) – In memory of Mrs. Charles (Freda) Irving.
4. Gold Flower Vases & Baptismal Bowl (1962) – In memory of Mrs. John Butler
5. Guest Book Stand & Coat/Hat Rack (1963) – In memory of Mrs. Phebe Manion (Eva Dinsdale's Mother).
6. I could not find the origin of the Lighted Cross that hung gracefully in the alter area or whether it was a Memorial Gift. No one remembers when it first appeared at the church, however there are pictures of it in the church after 1963.

SPECIAL GIFTS were from the Helping Hand Club,

Youth Fellowship, interested members & friends:

1. Pulpit Antependia    Gold Cross & Candlesticks

2. Portion of Carpeting    Portion of Church Organ

3. Cathedral Glass Windows    Chancel Rail

4. Flower Stands

- From gifts of money and labor from church members, the project expanded to the entire church at a cost of around \$5,000.00.
- September 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> 1962 church and youth members, Helping Hand Ladies, and friends of the church had a tent at the Blairsburg, Iowa Farm Progress Show. Maid rites, baked beans, and homemade pies, and other items were donated and sold at the Farm Progress Show. There was a time that the renovation project had come to a halt due to lack of money. It has been said that approximately \$3,000.00 was earned from the Farm Progress Show to help motivate and finish the project.
- The other renovation projects consisted of interior and exterior redecoration, new church pews, new church hymnals, complete oak paneling, refinishing floor, chancel and isle carpeting, window drapes, new entrance doors and other outdoor improvements. It was under the leadership of Rev. A.E. Rau and was completed with a dedication service, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1963.

- The chancel furnishings were built and installed by the Raven Millwork and Lumber Co.:
  1. Oak Railing – Finished & Installed - \$217.88 Plus Tax
  2. Platform Cutting & Lowering Estimate - \$350.00
  3. Communion Table – 24"x40"x30" - \$71.40 Plus Tax
  4. Pulpit – Finished - \$171.71 Plus Tax
  5. Valance – Finished – Installed - \$60.84 Plus Tax
  6. Oak Panel, Installed - \$90.00 – Plus Tax
- W.S.W.S. (former MC Helping Hand Ladies) purchased two stoves, refrigerator, dehumidifier and 20 chairs after their annual chicken supper Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 1964.
- Window Draperies were given in Memory of Rayner Nickles family. (Audrey and Don Coulter made and installed the draperies).
- Wall Rack for Memorial Book was given by Mr. and Mrs. Allen Nail, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1964.
- Memorial Book was given in Memorial of Mrs. Blaine (Dorothy) Nickles by her family, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1964.
- New Communion Set was given in Memorial of Mrs. Maundo Campidilli by her family, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1964.
- Baptism Font given by Kathryn (Butler) Soncrant in loving memory of her husband, Jerry. Kathy and Jerry were

married on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1964. Jerry was killed in a car accident August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1964.

- **Sunday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, 1966** was set aside for the **Mulberry Center Church's 79<sup>th</sup> Anniversary observance**. The year began with 116 members. Conference Superintendents, Dr. John A. Dowd and Rev. A.E. Wilken, with the local pastor, Rev. A.E. Rau, conducted the worship. Nearly 50 persons attended a special supper meeting in the evening. Slides and pictures of historical interest were shown and historical displays were enjoyed.
- **In 1968 the Evangelical United Brethren took on another name change when the congregation merged with the Methodist Church, eventually becoming Mulberry Center United Methodist Church.**
- Memorials for dedications in 1969 were a slide projector and pulpit scarf given in memory of Mrs. Gretna Braynard by her children. (Mother of Edna Dinsdale).
- In 1969 a record player and projection screen was given in memory of Mr. Ivan Thompson by Mrs. Ivan Thompson.
- Mrs. Alice M. Rusk passed away on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1970. Shortly after that a beautiful picture was given in memory of Clarence C. and Alice M. Rusk by their family.

- June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1971 a dedication service was for a silver service set, chest, and dining room tables in memory of Mr. & Mrs. C.C. Rusk.
- June 24<sup>th</sup>, 1971 there was also a dedication service for six insulated pitchers given in memory of Minnie, which was the mother of Mrs. Forrest Rusk.
- **August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1987 the Mulberry Center United Methodist Church observed its 100<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary in combination with the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Mulberry Center Helping Hand United Methodist Women.** The celebration began at 10:30AM with the Rev. Bonifacio B. Mequi, Jr., Fort Dodge district superintendent, speaking.
- To commemorate the event, a “homecoming” for all former ministers: Rev. A.E. Rau, Rev. Byron Surface, Rev. James Pittman, and Rev. Charles Smith, plus past/present members and friends of the congregation was planned. After a catered luncheon that cost \$3.00 per person; there was an old fashioned hymn sing, later former pastors would share memories and letters from friends unable to attend would be read. Souvenir plates and bells were available for purchase.
- The Grace United Methodist and Mulberry Center United Methodist Church congregations have been part of the

same charge, since the beginning and have shared the same Pastoral leadership.

- The Mulberry Center Church paid (1/3) of the Iowa Conference dues and Pastoral commitments. Grace Church paid (2/3's).
- The Mulberry Center United Methodist Church had 37 members when it closed December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1991 and was free of debt.
- After the regular expenses and Charge Conference dues were paid, the church supported projects outside the church, such as the Red Bird Mission and Henderson Settlement in Kentucky, Heifer Project, International and Self-Help Tractor.
- Beginning with the Rev. E. Church and ending with Rev. Charles W. Smith, the congregation has had 34 ministers serving.
- **In the fall of 1988 the Administrative Councils of the Mulberry Center United Methodist Church and the Grace United Methodist Church voted to form a Merger Study Committee. The purpose of the Committee was to study the feasibility of merging the two congregations and making a recommendation to a Church Conference.**

- Members of the Merger Study Committee are from Mulberry Center: Mark Berogan, Richard Berleen,Carolynn Miller, and Tom Romick; and from Grace: Gary Dinsdale, Maxine Anderson, Don McCollough, and Shirley Knoll, plus the leadership of Rev. Charles W. Smith.
- The Merger Study Committee recommends that the Mulberry Center United Methodist Church and the Grace United Methodist Church merge forming a new congregation subject to certain provisions.
  1. The Mulberry Center United Methodist Church land will be given to the Ray Miller family, which is now owned by Colleen Aldridge. The land will be restored as nearly as possible to a usable state. The Mulberry Center Church Building will be donated to the Hamilton County Historical Society and moved to Bonebright Park.
  2. The Mulberry Center sanctuary contents, except the church organ, will be moved with the church building. The organ will be placed in a room in the new church building. Any memorial gifts and/or contents that are usable in the new building will be transferred to that building.

3. Contents of the Mulberry Center buildings that are not transferred to the new building or moved to Bonebright Park will be offered for sale. The sale receipts will be used to purchase equipment for the new building. The contents to be used from the present buildings in the new building will be left to the discretion of the Building Committee.
- 1988 property was purchased at 2020 Superior Street by a 80% majority
  - **1989 the Mulberry Center congregation and the Grace congregation voted to merge. (100% Favorable).**
  - 1989 May construction was engaged to design and build a church building on 2020 Superior Street.
  - 1991 Construction of a new church building at 2020 Superior Street in Webster City, Iowa.
  - The operating Budgets for Grace and Mulberry Center will be combined to form one Budget by January, 1991.
  - The Merged Congregation will have a Worship Center at Mulberry Center and a Worship Center at Grace Church in Webster City until a **new church is built on newly purchased property on 2020 Superior Street.**
  - **THE LAST SERVICE AT MULBERRY CENTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH WAS DECEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup>, 1991.**

- The Mulberry Center lighted cross (origin unknown), baptismal font, and many other items of interest were taken to the new church building and placed in the chapel area to commemorate the two congregations merging together.
- **The new church will be called Faith United Methodist Church.** The first service scheduled for the new building for both congregations will be 10:30 AM January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1992 with church school at 9:15 AM.
- Immediately after the Mulberry Center Church closed in 1991, the WSWS (former Mulberry Center Helping Hand Ladies) and several church members, including yours truly, started a Fundraiser. **\$25,000.00 had to be raised in 6 months or the church would be torn down.**
- **It was agreed that anything left over from the \$25,000.00 would be left as a dowry (which turned out to be \$7,000.00) to the City of Webster City for the purpose of caring for the church, once it was moved.**
- Good records had to be kept if, the \$25,000.00 could not be raised - the money that had been given; had to be returned to each donor.
- **When it was determined that the \$25,000.00 was raised; Faith United Methodist Church was to form a committee**

**to move the church. Gerald Caquelin was in charge of hiring a mover for the church.**

- In 1993 sod was removed around the Mulberry Center Church. The steeple, as well as, the side entry had already been removed earlier.
- In September, 1994 a picture shows the church deteriorating – paint has fallen off the church’s exterior and etc. **With the \$25,000.00 in hand,** Faith United Methodist Church still hasn’t moved the church and it’s been almost 5 years. So finally, the original mover was fired and a new mover was hired to move the church.
- **November, 1994 Ionia Dinsdale reported** – In regard to moving the Mulberry Center Church ... At the time the Helping Hand Club and other interested persons decided to try to raise the money to move the church; the club had \$4,741.06 to start the project. A bake sale was held in Webster City at Betty Nail’s garage and donations amounted to \$21,025.85 plus interest of \$984.55 have been earned.

We have spent \$50.50 for a city building permit, \$2,590.00 for a foundation and made deposits amounting to \$2,632.00 to railroad and electric companies in preparation for moving. There may be some refunds on some of this

amount. We now have a balance of \$21,478.96 and will still have to pay the mover, the carpenter, someone to fill the hole and for painting the church. If the building is not moved this year, it will be moved next spring.

- **The Mulberry Center Church was moved January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1995,** (located 10 miles Northeast of Webster City) to move the church turned out to be approximately a 24 mile trip to what was then called Bonebright Complex in Webster City. They started a little before 8:00AM, on a snowy blustery day, and arrived at the Bonebright Complex at 1:30PM. The route was to the corner north, east 1 mile and the south to old Hwy. 20. Then east to the 1<sup>st</sup> gravel road going south and over the Interstate 20. Then to the 1<sup>st</sup> gravel road to the west. On to next corner (landfill) and then south to the Kamrar blacktop. Then on west to Hwy. 17 and north into town. Tuesday, the 24<sup>th</sup>, by 8:30PM, it was on the foundation. This makes a valuable addition to the Bonebright Complex; now know as the Wilson Brewer Park – Museums and Visitor’s Center.

- **A THANK YOU NOTE WAS SENT TO ALL THAT DONATED TO THE PROJECT AFTER THE CHURCH WAS MOVED:**

*The moving of the Mulberry Center Church has been completed. Thank you for your*

*generosity, which helped to make this possible. We hope that in the future you will have the opportunity to visit the church at its new location at Bonebright Park. Mulberry Helping Hand and Faith United Methodist Church*

- August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1995 the Freeman-Journal shows Bob Warwick working carefully to fit the steeple back on top of the Mulberry Center Church at the Bonebright Museum Complex. Peterson Construction provided the crane to lift the steeple to the top of the roof.
- In 2011 another renovation of the Mulberry Center Church's interior was approved by the Historical Board, if a Fundraiser was done to raise the money.
- August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012 after the money was raised and with the help of Kent Harfst and City of Webster City employees the renovation was completed at a cost of over \$13,000.00. The foyer and sanctuary were painted, new draperies, carpet, foyer floor, church rewired with electricity, candlelight lighting consisting of ceiling lights, wall sconces, and alter lamps, exterior of church scraped of paint and repainted, ventilation screens placed in attic area in front

and back of church, and finally the front double doors and above the exterior windows painted the mulberry color.

- **Topping off the renovation was a donation BY NANCY KAYSER of a STAINED GLASS WINDOW TO HANG IN THE ALTER AREA.** Information regarding the stained glass window per Nancy Kayser: “The stained glass donated to the church is the top part of the B.C. Mason stained glass window from the Universalist Church. Stained glass specialists believe that the Mason window dates from the 1880’s to 1898. The church was remodeled in 1898. Due to the coloring of the glass, the specialist also suggest that the glass may be of German origin. It is unknown where the window was built.

B.C. Mason is said to be the first white male child born (November, 1856) in Webster City. The middle section of the B.C. Mason window was placed in the 1926 Henderson-Kayser law office building at 817 Des Moines Street.

This was Kendall Young’s church. His window, along with his wife’s window, were salvaged and placed in the front entrance of the new addition to Kendall Young Library.

The Universalist Church existed for 118 years, before it was torn down in May of 1992. It was located at the corner of

Bank and Willson Avenue, address was 925 Willson Avenue.”

- **How community was named:** Mr. and Mrs. Phil Morris come from Wisconsin where fruits and flowers grew in abundance. Mrs. Morris’s granddaughter, Mrs. John Heffner, can remember having been told that her grandmother cried two or three days after her arrival at Waterman, a mile north of what was later called Mulberry, because of things being so barren. You couldn’t see anything, but prairie wilderness and sloughs. When they settled on their farm there was not a tree nor a fence to be seen for miles.

**When they finally moved to what would eventually be called “the Mulberry Farm.” Mrs. Morris sent to Wisconsin for mulberry trees which she promptly planted and it was from that the community got its name. It is said that “you couldn’t see the barn, for the mulberry trees.”**

The word “**Center**” comes from being “**close to their hearts**” or in the “**middle of things.**”

**Hence the name, Mulberry Center!!!**

It was only natural to name the church and schoolhouse, Mulberry Center Church or Mulberry Center Schoolhouse.

**The “Mulberry Farm” was the “center” of all kinds of social activity, including strawberry festivals, quilting bees, parties and also other similar events so popular with pioneers.**

- The 1902 Biographical Record of Hamilton County reported that Morris named the area Phillipsburg and assisted in getting the school house built. The Mulberry Center school house was built on the Morris farm and later was known as Blairsburg #3. (Yours truly attended this school)!
- Early settlers of Blairsburg Township, Hamilton County, about the same time as Mr. & Mrs. Morris were the J.C. Miller family and they located here in 1881 on an eighty acre tract of land in Section 5, just northeast across the field from the Morris farm.

### **REFLECTIONS OF ADAM POE MILLER**

(Grandfather of volunteers: Colleen Aldridge, Arlene Mosher, andCarolynn Miller).

- When they first moved to their farm that night, it was said, as he did his chores by star light; he couldn't see any lights in the east, (meaning Webster City), because there wasn't any electricity at that time.
- Acre after acre was placed under the plow, until the entire amount was highly cultivated and, as the years passed,

added to his land possessions. **The land was broken with four horses hitched to a plow. The sod was turned over and laid a season after which it was turned back and the next spring sowed to wheat or oats.**

- **The wilderness prairie served as a cattle range for residents of the southern part of the state. The cattle were brought here by the hundreds and grazed over the country in that section. There were no fences. In fact, any land away from the river or stream was thought undesirable - for no one knew how to tile out the sloughs which furnished so much trouble for the early settler.**
- As the years passed, J.C. Miller added to his land possessions, until he acquired approximately 280 acres.
- After 13 years of farming the Morris family moved to Webster City and located on the corner of Walnut and Seneca Streets; where Mr. Morris entered into the real estate business.
- J.C. Miller purchased the “Mulberry Farm” or Morris farm. Mr. Miller later passed this land to his son, Adam Poe Miller, and then to Poe’s son, Harold Miller. Today, J.C. Miller’s great-granddaughter, Carolyn Miller proudly owns the “Mulberry Farm” or the “old” Morris place. Even though the buildings and timber are all gone; there will be

an occasional mulberry tree or bush that needs to be cut out of the drainage ditch.

- No “real” roads were followed due to the sloughs and swamps. In the winter the settlers drove “as the crow flies” and in the summer they went as best they could around and around the sloughs or through them.
- In the winter it was “tough going,” Snow would pile up and often teams would go right over the tops of the fences. There were no such luxuries as fur overcoats or did they have overshoes and the family had to endure many hardships in the early days when they were establishing a home on the frontier. Those were days of hardship and toil when the family was far from towns with their conveniences - they traded at Webster City.
- Poe Miller said that in Mulberry Center all the settlers would agree to go to town in the morning and come back in the afternoon – during the winter. The reason for this was one way traffic. A road for sleds was finally worn down and on each side would be soft snow. All must keep in the same track and no one could pass another sled. Therefore, all must go in at the same time and come home at the same time – a fine example of pioneer cooperation.

- Coal was hauled by the Mulberry pioneers from a mine called Stockdale, south of Webster City and from Lehigh. Coal cost \$2.00 a ton and the settlers usually went in pairs taking two days for the trip. They were together to help each other in case of accident or other unforeseen trouble. Morris and J.C. Miller often went together. They would take their food and horse feed and set out, remaining overnight in an old shed near the mine. One trip was made just before a blizzard and the men were several days getting home. One can imagine the anxiety caused to their families at home.
- The matter of coal brought another pioneer story to Poe Miller's mind. Mr. Morris and sons trapped many muskrats which were plentiful in the sloughs and ponds. They sold these hides for 10 cents each and depended on this income for a part of their livelihood. One day J.C. Miller and Morris agreed on a date to go to Lehigh for coal. The night before, however, Morris informed J.C. Miller that he wasn't ready to make the trip to Lehigh and said: "I'm not ready, because I haven't enough money to buy the coal. We didn't trap as many muskrats as we planned last night, but I believe we will catch enough tonight." The trip was postponed a day and sure enough Morris trapped enough animals. He took

the hides to Webster City, sold them and went on to Lehigh for his coal. Poe Miller said: "I suppose my father had only enough for his coal or he would have lent him the money." People were poor in those days, but they didn't mind. All had about the same amount and they never imagined the luxuries we have today."

- Crops included enough wheat to furnish the settler with flour. Stock was sold in Webster City where each butcher kept scales in front of his store. "Many a time my father and I have marketed fine beef for 2-1/2 to 3 cents a pound," Poe Miller recalled.
- Game was plentiful including prairie chicken, quail, geese and ducks, as well as cranes by the thousands. Early settlers didn't pay much attention to it.
- "When I was a boy all the neighbors were on equal footing." Said Mr. Miller. "Traveling was done in wagons and if anyone possessed a "spring seat" he was awfully lucky. Young fellows used to take their best girls to church in wagons."

- Today, a sign on the east side of the road and donated by the Mulberry Center Helping Hand Club, points out where the prairie church once stood.
- **In 2015 the Mulberry Center Church will be 125 years old!!!**

Historical Facts of the Mulberry Center Church were written and sometimes copied from newspapers published during that time by *Carolynn Miller*; Facility Coordinator of the church --- March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

