

Church of God Historian

Historical Society of the Church of God Vol 11 No 3 Spring 2011

The website will NOT replace the newsletter. Newsletters for the current year, 2011, will not appear on the website until 2012. Current newsletters are a benefit of membership in the Society—which we hope you will join. The cost is only \$15 a year (although due to the pressure of the rising costs of paper, printing, and mailing, we may soon have to move up to \$20).



HISTORICAL SOCIETY WEBSITE

Sitting to Dale Stultz's right is David L. Neidert, who, together with his son, has set up and gotten 'online' a very professional-looking website for the Historical Society of the Church of God. David currently serves as Director of Student Development at Anderson University School of Theology, as well as teaching several courses for the Seminary. We have often talked of a Historical Society website, but since we lacked a volun-

teer who could serve as 'webmaster,' we have not felt free to go ahead with the project.

Keeping the website current is a demanding task. We hope to feature back issues of the *Church of God Historian* (but not those of the current year), historical photos (Dale Stultz's department), and news of ongoing historical research being conducted by Society members. We are greatly indebted to David for his help.

For some time now, we have been sending the *Church of God Historian* abroad, but for the first time we will now become a truly international presence. The Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson) is now readily accessible to anyone with a computer and an internet connection. And we hope we shall soon have PayPal up and functioning for those who want to buy books. This is exciting news for all of us.

No, we didn't forget the web address. Here it is—easy to recall: www.chohistoricalociety.org

Church of God Historian

Newsletter of the Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson)

Vol 11 No 3 Spring 2011

This newsletter is published three times a year: Fall; Winter; and Spring. It is published by the Society on behalf of its members. Printed in Anderson Indiana.

All correspondence should be addressed to: Historical Society of the Church of God, P.O. Box 702, Anderson, Indiana 46015. Email should be sent to *Merle D. Strege*, Historical Society President, at: mdstrege@anderson.edu.

Church of God Historian is managed by the Executive Committee of the Society. Merle D. Strege, President, Dale E. Stultz, Vice-President, Sadie B. Evans, Secretary-Treasurer, D.E. Welch, Publisher and Managing Editor.

The Historical Society

The Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson) exists to encourage the collection and preservation of artifacts and documents relating to the history of the Church of God; to encourage historical research and the writing of Church of God history; and to provide a forum for like-minded people interested in participating in and furthering the study of Church of God history.

Membership is open to all who are vitally interested in what the Society desires to accomplish. Membership dues are \$15 per year (\$10 for students.) Checks should be made out to *Historical Society of the Church of God* and sent to Box 702, Anderson IN 46015.

Questions From Our Readers

Occasionally, we receive email or telephone calls from both Society members and others asking for information which historians of the Church (so it seems) are supposed to have. Sometimes the questions are easy to answer; sometimes they are not. The more difficult ones are best for us, for they drive us back to the documents for possible answers. In that process, both we and our questioners learn something.

Question

Did Daniel Warner speak German?

This is one of those questions which cannot be answered—except by recourse to the historian’s refuge: *inference*. We have no direct evidence either that he did or did not—although he did have German bibles in his possession, including a ‘modern-speech’ translation of the German New Testament. Occasionally, he referred to this latter one, although all this evidence is a reading knowledge of German and the ability to use a German dictionary. Did he actually speak German, even as a second language? We do not know.

What we do know is that German was included in the subjects which Warner took at Vermillion College. If he knew the language and actually spoke it with any great facility, it is not too likely he would have had to study it as a college or high school subject—but one never knows.

An additional factor which must be weighed is that, for a decade at least, Warner worked with the Church of God of North America (sometimes referred to—and not always with kindness—as ‘Winebrennarians’). Many of those he names in his journals, both ministers and lay persons, had German names. Many of the leaders and lay

members of the Churches of God had at one time, either directly or indirectly, been associated with or had connections with the Germans Reformed Church. John Winebrenner himself was reputed to be ‘a very fine orator’ in German (which seems to have been his first language). Many of them may thus have had German connections, but did not pass along German language and culture to their children.

This may well have been Daniel Warner’s own family situation. David Warner, the father, was certainly of German extraction. According to information given us by Dawn Warner Perry (see Page 7 of this newsletter) the name ‘Warner’ is likely an American form of ‘Verner’ or ‘Varner,’ both quite common German names.

And, according to the records we have seen, the wife of David and mother of Daniel (and ten others it turns out—see Page 7 again) was Leah Dierdorf, which is certainly a German name. (She was led into the Churches of God by Daniel, was baptized by him, and lived the rest of her life as a faithful member of that Church. The father, David, never did yield to Daniel’s pleading that he “accept Christ as his personal Savior”—even on his death bed, with Daniel sitting beside him.)

We have no record indicating that German was used in the David Warner household. In that time and place, German families in the United States with children in public schools were quite rapidly converting to English. If the parents spoke German to each other, it was usually in private. And if the children remained in a largely German-speaking community past their teen years, they were probably familiar with German, but did not often use it as their first language. (It is quite possible that John Rupert, a later missionary to Germany, was just such a person.)

Camp Meeting Sermons of 1929

Two volumes in the Archives of the Church of God preserve sermons from Anderson Camp Meeting. Researchers can open collections of selected sermons from the meetings of 1913 and 1928 for a glimpse of some of the issues on the minds of Church of God preachers in those years. It's unfortunate that no such volume preserves the sermons of the camp meeting for 1929, one of the more contentious gatherings in the history of the annual meeting. Of the sermons delivered that summer, no fewer than three addressed the subject of Christian unity. Three of the best known preachers in the movement turned their thoughts to the subject that had held the movement's theological attention since earlier that spring.

A few months before the 1929 Camp meeting Russell Byrum delivered his now famous address on the subject of Christian unity. The paper clearly departed from traditional Church of God teaching on this doctrine. At the heart of the matter was Byrum's refusal to conform to what he regarded as the "creedish and sectish attitude"¹ held by many in the movement. He also opposed the common belief that the Church of God movement possessed all truth; rather, thought Byrum, the movement should be progressing into fuller truth. Consequently, he also opposed withholding Christian fellowship from Christians of different theological opinions.

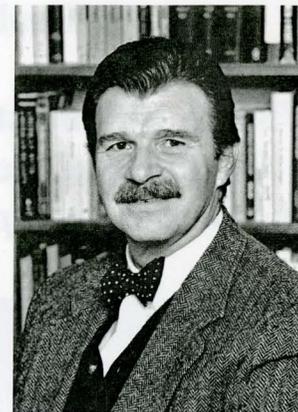
Byrum's departure from generally held views and those of *Gospel Trumpet* Editor F. G. Smith was readily apparent, to none more than Birdie Smith and R. L. Berry. Birdie was F. G. Smith's wife, and Berry had assumed the office of managing editor at the *Trumpet* after Byrum left to become a full-time teacher at the college. The two brought heresy charges against

Byrum within months of his address.

Byrum's trial and acquittal at the 1929 Camp meeting is a story often told. Similarly, the sermon delivered at the meeting by Byrum's once and future pastor, E. A. Reardon, has also received more than a little attention. Barry Callen included the text in his anthology, *Following the Light*.² Reardon attacked the idea that the Church of God was the hub of Christendom. Moreover, he declared, Christ himself would ignore any "reformation exclusiveness" and cultivate instead the unity which rests in himself.

Less well known are two additional sermons delivered that same June. F. G. Smith, champion of the traditional theology, took the Camp meeting pulpit to re-affirm positions that by 1929 he had often stated in book and the pages of the *Trumpet*. Indeed, not long after Byrum had read his paper to Indiana ministers Smith reprinted his own 1928 Camp meeting sermon on the same theme. It is not too much to assume that for at least a year Smith sniffed doctrinal change on the winds and set his mind to oppose it. Camp meeting 1929 gave him another opportunity to restate traditional doctrine.

Theologically between Reardon and Smith stood A. F. Gray, pastor of Park Place Church of God, and the third to address the topic of unity. Chairman of the Anderson College trustees, Gray was well on his way to becoming one of the movement's most widely respected ministers. His sermon on Christian unity reflected this mediating stance. Titled "The Leaven of the Reformation," the sermon stipulated a definition of reformation which regarded the restoration of the church as a developmental process, going even so far as to assert that even the New Testament



church itself had room for improvement. Like Smith, Gray considered the Christian church's apostasy as given. But in a related point he observed that the Jews were not the sole people of God even though they were his chosen ones. In this Gray shared a perception in Reardon's more inflammatory discourse. Israel's mistake, said Gray, was their exclusivism, "...thinking that they were the only people God could have. They did not consider that God is the God of the whole [human] race and no respecter of persons. Thus they lost their opportunity and went into darkness." In case his hearers missed the point, Gray added, "There is a lesson in this for us."

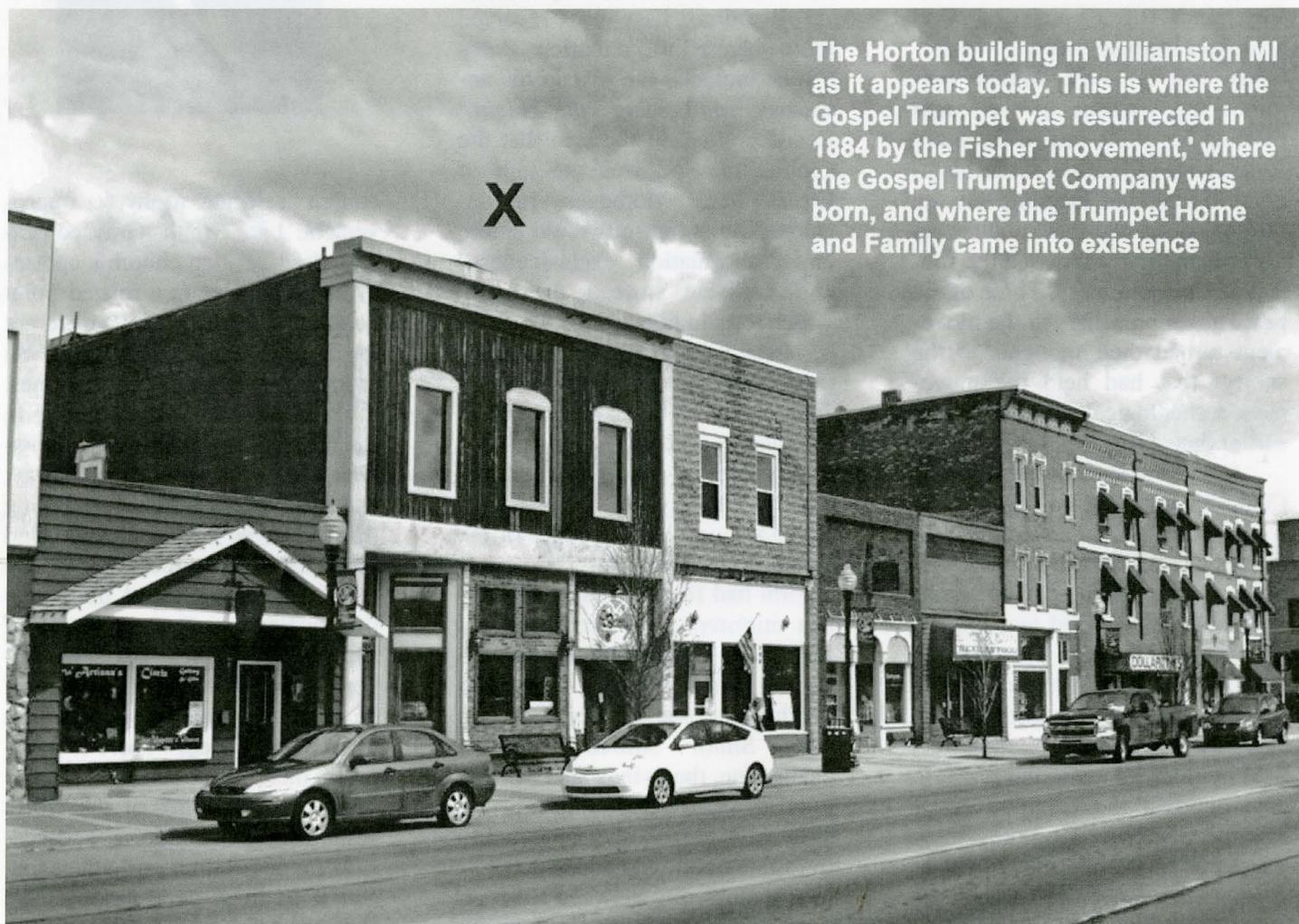
Today we think of the North American Convention as an occasion for inspiration and education, and it is. Such expectations were also true of much earlier gatherings. But the preaching history of the 1929 Camp meeting suggests that then sermons were also used to set brothers and sisters straight, or to set them thinking.

¹ Russell Byrum Journal, January 17, 1930, Russell Byrum Papers, Archives of the Church of God

² (Anderson: Warner Press, 2000).

REBIRTH OF A PERIODICAL—AND THE BEGINNING OF A CHURCH. It Really All Began in Williamston, Michigan in 1884

A Visit to Williamston At the Beginning of April, 2011 Confirms Documentary Evidence of the Fisher-Horton-Warner Collaboration in Resurrecting *The Gospel Trumpet* in 1884 Following Its Virtual Demise in Bucyrus, Ohio



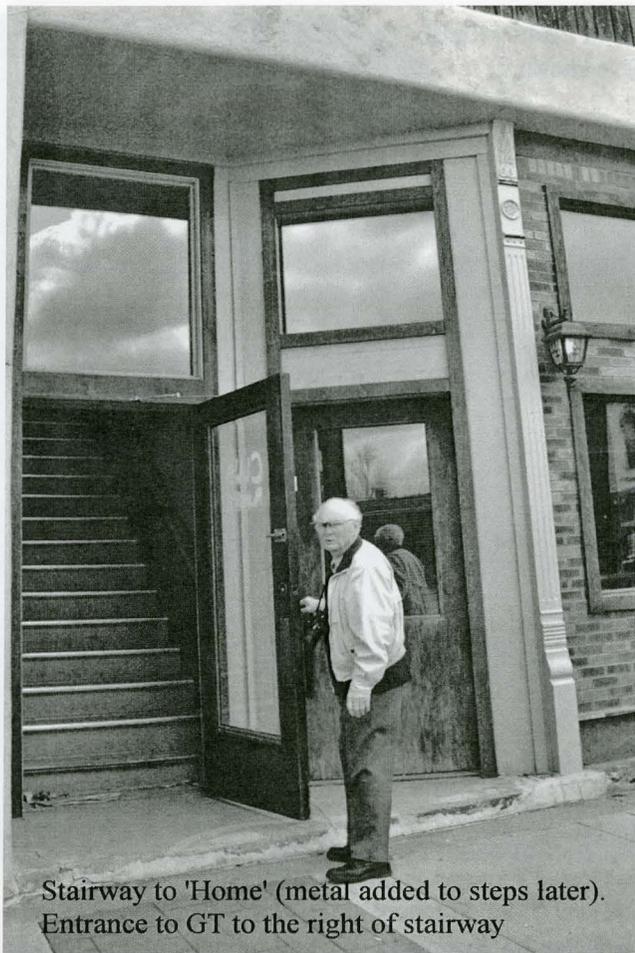
The Horton building in Williamston MI as it appears today. This is where the Gospel Trumpet was resurrected in 1884 by the Fisher 'movement,' where the Gospel Trumpet Company was born, and where the Trumpet Home and Family came into existence

Illness and bad weather delayed us in visiting the town of Williamston, Michigan, where we had documentary reason to believe the first Gospel Trumpet building was located—and, in fact, still stood after well over a hundred years. But, on April 1 of this year, we were finally able to drive up to south-central Michigan (a half-hour east of Lansing) to see for ourselves if what we had been led by internet and documents research and telephone calls to believe was the case was actually true. It was!

The current owner of the building happily showed us around, upstairs and down—even the basement which had been fully utilized by what became the Gospel Trumpet Company. Thomas Horton, a convert of J.C. Fisher's, and a prominent businessman and leader in the town of Williamston, owned the building. He remodeled it, putting on a new roof and replacing an inadequate foundation with a very thick six-foot structure of field stones and concrete on which we found the year 1883 scratched.

According to Allie R. Fisher, in her unpublished autobiography, the upstairs became the first Gospel Trumpet Home and a "sleeping apartment" for guests. The original stairway (as well as the one to the basement) was still there.

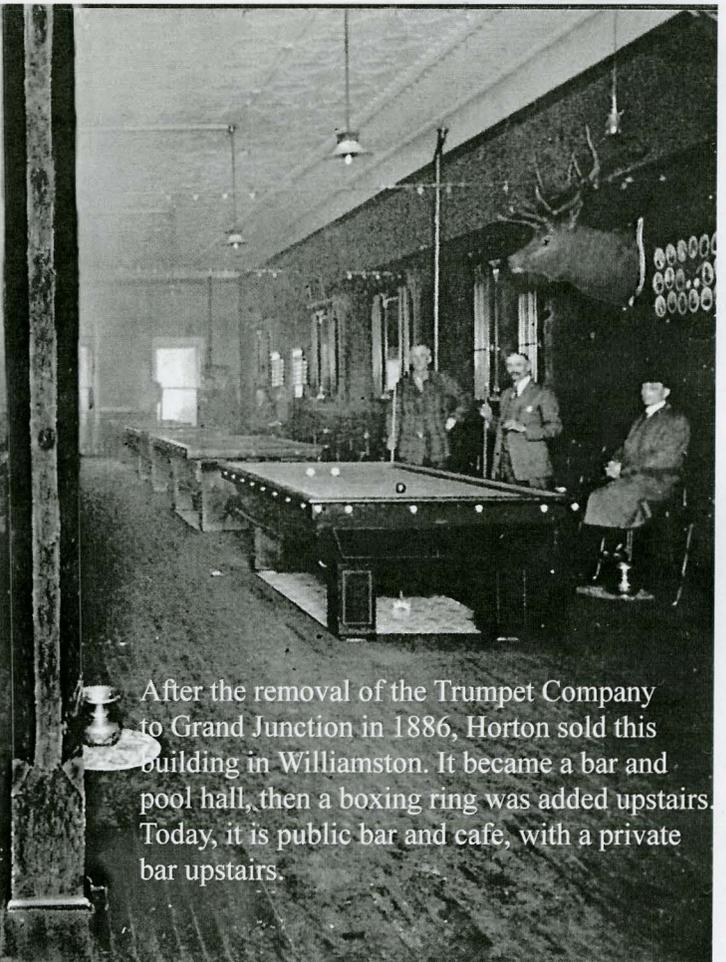
Williamston has changed a great deal in the past 125 years, but we still felt as though we had been caught in a time warp. We were indeed 'treading where the saints had trod.' All theological rhetoric aside, this is where our 'family' began. (Stultz & Welch).



Stairway to 'Home' (metal added to steps later).
Entrance to GT to the right of stairway

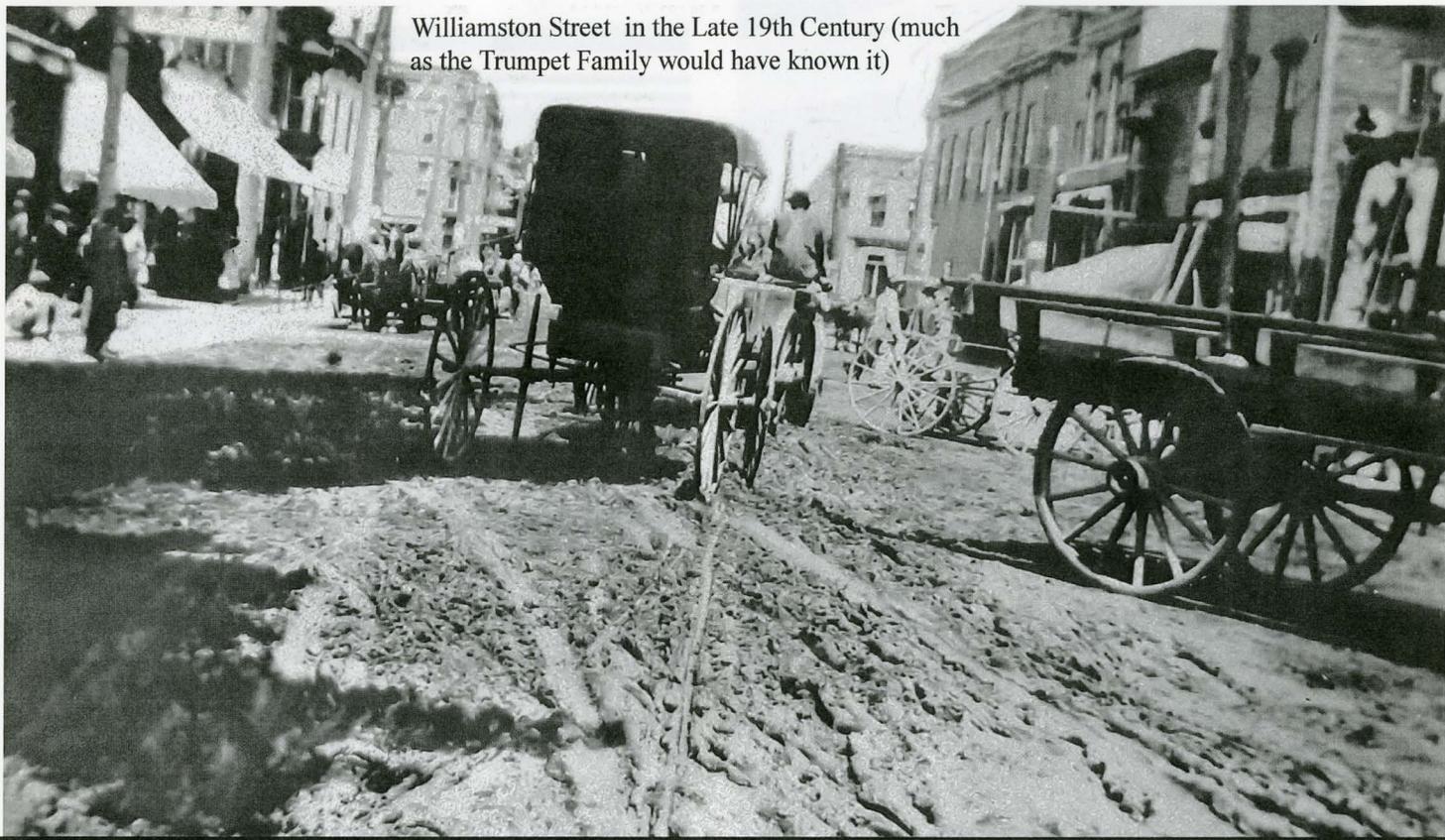


The "new foundation" installed by Thomas Horton in 1883

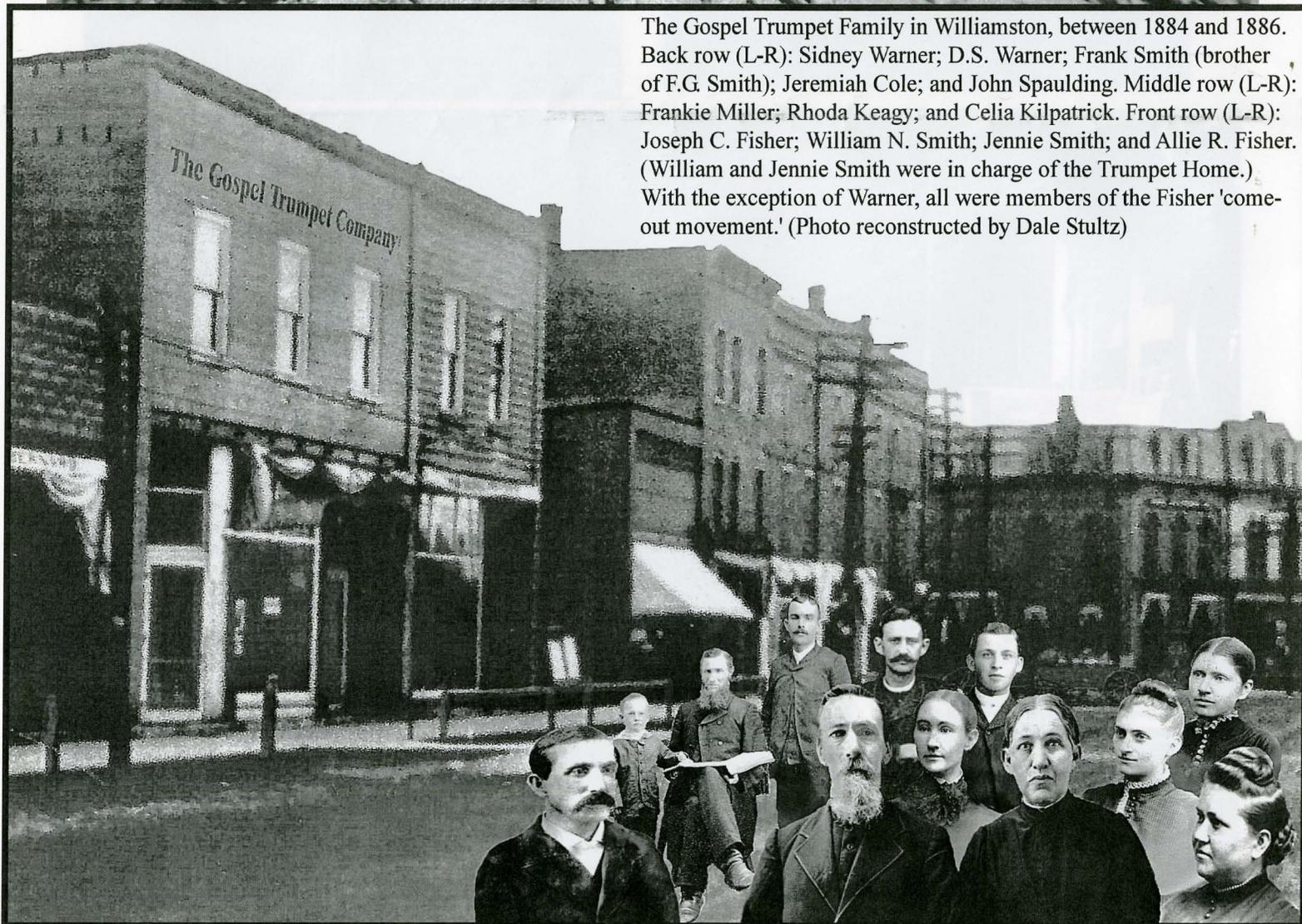


After the removal of the Trumpet Company to Grand Junction in 1886, Horton sold this building in Williamston. It became a bar and pool hall, then a boxing ring was added upstairs. Today, it is public bar and cafe, with a private bar upstairs.

Williamston Street in the Late 19th Century (much as the Trumpet Family would have known it)



The Gospel Trumpet Family in Williamston, between 1884 and 1886. Back row (L-R): Sidney Warner; D.S. Warner; Frank Smith (brother of F.G. Smith); Jeremiah Cole; and John Spaulding. Middle row (L-R): Frankie Miller; Rhoda Keagy; and Celia Kilpatrick. Front row (L-R): Joseph C. Fisher; William N. Smith; Jennie Smith; and Allie R. Fisher. (William and Jennie Smith were in charge of the Trumpet Home.) With the exception of Warner, all were members of the Fisher 'come-out movement.' (Photo reconstructed by Dale Stultz)



A Family Researcher Comes to Visit



We were pleased recently to have a visit from Dawn Warner Perry (shown here immediately to Dale Stultz's right), a direct lineal descendant of D.S. Warner's uncle (brother of D.S. Warner's father). We had a very helpful exchange of information concerning D.S. Warner and the family. A recently-acquired Warner family Bible (from which of the many children we do not know) now resides in Church of God Archives. It contains the records of births, which we have made available to Dawn and which we have reproduced below. D.S. Warner, it seems, was not the 'last-born' of six children, but the tenth of eleven children.

Births

David, son of Adam Warner was born in Frederick Co. Maryland on the 4th of June 1808.
His wife

Leah Warner was born in York Co. Penna. on the 6th of February 1815.

Polly, daughter of David and Leah Warner was born in Stark Co. Ohio on the 22nd of April 1834.

Lewis, Son of David and Leah Warner was born in Stark Co. Ohio on the 8th of August 1836.

Sarah, Daughter of David and Leah Warner was born in Stark Co. Ohio on the 17th of September 1839.

Adam, son of David and Leah Warner was born in Wayne Co. Ohio on the 26th of February 1841.

x Deaths

More Births

Joseph, Son of David and Leah Warner was born in Wayne Co. Ohio on the 16th of November 1831.

Elizabeth - Daughter of David and Leah Warner was born in Portage Co. Ohio on the 13th of March 1834.

Mararet, Daughter of David and Leah Warner was born in Wayne Co. Ohio on the 18th of November 1836.

Amazda, Warner was born John, Son of David and Leah Warner was born in Wayne Co. Ohio on the 17th of May 1840.

Samuel Sidney, Son of D. and Leah Warner was born in Portage Co. Ohio on the 25th of June 1842.

Samantha Elwell, Daughter of D. and Leah Warner was born in Crawford Co. Ohio on the 13th of May 1844.

NOTICE

11th Annual Meeting

of the Historical Society of the Church of God (Anderson)

Date: Saturday, June 25, 2011

Time: 3:30-5:00 p.m.

Place: Decker Hall 133

Special Program by Dale E. Stultz and Douglas E. Welch

A New Book: *The Gospel Trumpet Years*



Trumplet Family began here in Williamston, MI 1884. 1884

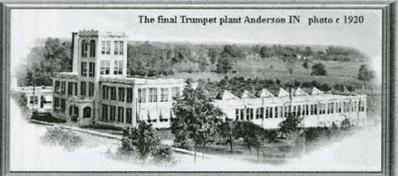


Grand Junction MI c 1887



Moundville W. Va. photo c 1900

**From Comeoutism
To The
Christian Brotherhood Hour**



The final Trumplet plant Anderson IN photo c 1920

"The Gospel Trumpet Years is not peopled by "grand, towering, heroic" figures without whom God could neither have spoken nor acted in the human arena. It is, rather, about thousands and thousands of ordinary people, people like you and us, who have given themselves to holy living and the unity of all who are in Christ, believing that God sent his Son, not to condemn the world, but to save it."

"Our forebears were, as we have reiterated, people such as we are. We do not for a moment suppose we believe with their intensity (or their naiveté for that matter) or live with their singularity of purpose. But neither have we continued in their self-absorption and sectarian ways—something else this book seeks to celebrate. Even so, we must not forget that, while we cannot think and live as they did, they were still our 'family' progenitors."

The Gospel Trumpet Years

Dale E. Stultz and Douglas E. Welch



The Gospel Trumpet Years

1881 EDITORS 1961



BUT IT WAS "GOD'S LITTLE ONES" AS WARNER CALLED THEM, WHO TOOK IT AROUND THE WORLD




DALE E. STULTZ AND DOUGLAS E. WELCH

The Gospel Trumpet Years will be at the printers' very soon now and should be released by about the end of July this year. The book is 264 large-format pages and contains many new photographs, as well as a new Time-Line, maps, and other charts. Watch our website (www.chohistoricalociety.org) for further announcements. Pre-publication price will be \$31.50. The Society is setting up a PayPal account for your convenience. Visit our website to learn of special prices for books published by the Society—as well as contact addresses.