



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
22 CHURCH STREET
GOUVERNEUR, NY 13642

FPCGH-3A A CAPSULE HISTORY OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Gouverneur, New York April 14, 1983 Florence Thompson

This church originated in 1805 when four men came to what was then known as Cambray. The following year they returned with their families, and through efforts of Gouverneur Morris, Cambray became Gouverneur.

In 1817 a church group took the name Congregational Presbyterian Society and the first meeting-house was constructed. It was very crude, with slabs for seats, pulpit of unplanned boards, no heat other than slate footwarmers and portable stoves using domestic charcoal. They came on almost impassable roads in oxcarts and wagons loaded with women, children and hired help, always endangered by Indians. They stayed all day, bringing food for three services, with a generous jag of hay for oxen and horses. History tells of the day an itinerant minister came through on horseback, found the men away chopping wood and decided to move on. Mrs. Austin changed his mind. She told him the women needed the word of God just as much as the men did and he was to preach them a sermon right there. He waited, they rounded up the women and he preached them a sermon. This may have been the beginning of ERA. In 1824 the meeting-house was replaced by a sturdier structure and our present church site was deeded to the church society, to be held forever for church purposes. It was however necessary to first move a grave as the plot had been a cemetery.

In 1843 a new meeting-house was built for \$3,500. Among other things, it contained twenty four rectangular pews, with square doors, fastened with wooden buttons. After this date, the church became wholly Presbyterian. In 1892 a cornerstone was laid for the new church, built of Gouverneur marble, costing \$50,000.

In 1920 a new organ was given anonymously, the donor being recognized after her death. Later, the generosity of members and legacies promoted new dining room, nursery, new kitchen, organ repairs.

In 1958 the Presbyterian women's societies merged and became United Presbyterian Women. In 1967 Gouverneur celebrated one hundred fifty years of growth and our church members prepared an anniversary dinner to the public, featuring foods served by our early settlers.

Today, church planning and congregational performance have moved beyond the church interior, to the needs of the outside world. Our choir director, Mrs. Marylou Scott, is a potent force in promoting musical programs in our town, as well as our church. Our present minister, Rev. George Cox, came to us on July 1,

1973. He is a moving agent both within and without our church, who finds and helps to alleviate problems of family or individuals. In so many outside areas, our church members also find fertile fields for Home and Worldwide Missionary action.

Gouverneur Presbyterian Church has advanced through one hundred sixty six years of development comprising four churches, thirteen ministers and innumerable church additions and replacements of equipment.

We are most grateful to members of past and present years for their generous services. We are most humbly grateful, also, to a Divine Providence who directed and gave encouragement to church members through the years, to promote the Word of God within and without His House of Worship.