

The Terrace Park Community House

By Carol C. Cole

The Community House was built in 1890 by George Washington Corey as a Baptist Church, according to records held at the Terrace Park Historical Society. The Coreys came to Terrace Park in 1877 and lived in the big house on Wooster Pike now listed as 723 Indian Hill Road. George Corey developed Park Avenue and built four houses there: 715, 722, 726 and 729. The Corey's involvement with the Baptist Church began with Mrs. Corey teaching a Sunday School class in her home. With the rapid growth of that class there seemed to be a need for a church.

According to an undated newspaper article, it was the Coreys "who are mostly responsible for the building of the church. They started the movement, gave all of their time freely, paid half the expense, and donated the lot on which it stands. It's a very interesting structure since it made use of Corey's innovative poured cement procedure. This concrete was brought as ballast on sailing ships from Europe. The story goes that during a depression/recession or panic as it was then called, the owner of some barges on the Little Miami River suffered bankruptcy and Corey was able to obtain the powdered cement at auction for almost nothing. The buildings were poured a few feet at a time using handmade forms. The concrete was scored while still wet to give the building the appearance of having been built of blocks. Helen Barnett's grandmother described the building process "with the assistance of such working men as he could get and financial aid of all the residents."

After several years of use, a formal dedication was held. The building was described as "a comfortable and pretty little house of worship." It was "well equipped and modern. Besides the auditorium there is a Sunday School room, a dining room, a kitchen, choir loft and two dressing rooms. The interior is inviting and splendidly furnished and arranged." There was even a pool for full immersion baptism! All this happened even before Terrace Park was incorporated in 1893.

However, over the years the congregation dwindled and the building was no longer needed by the Baptists. After the doors were closed and it sat vacant, there was a rumor that the Nazarenes wanted the building. Three civic-minded Terrace Park gentlemen, Charles Meyer, Louis Breiling and Lewis Gatch, then purchased it from the Baptists with the idea of having the Village use it as a Town Hall. In 1921/22 the Village purchased the building and \$4,000 worth of bonds were issued for the purchase and remodeling of the building. By 1927 all the renovations were complete and there was \$6.86

left in the fund, which was abolished and \$6.86 was transferred to the sinking fund of Terrace. Park.

Thus, the Baptist Church in Terrace Park became the Town Hall or Community House. However, besides doing duty as the meeting place of Village Council and other civic organizations, it has served at one time or another as the meeting place for almost every organization in Terrace Park. That means that probably everyone who has lived in Terrace Park since 1922 has fond memories of time spent there. Some even remember going to school there when other school buildings became too crowded. Over the years there have been changes and additions but it still stands as a serviceable building with an interesting construction and history.