

**THE HISTORY OF ST. JOHN'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH, MONTICELLO,  
NEW YORK, FOR ONE HUNDRED  
YEARS, 1816-1916, COMPILED TO  
COMMEMORATE ITS CENTENARY**

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The history of St. John's Episcopal church, Monticello, New York, for one hundred years, 1816-1916, compiled to commemorate its centenary by Walter White Reid

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**WALTER WHITE REID**

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FIRST CHURCH

1835—1882





## PREFACE

THE collection of data in connection with a parish history is probably a difficult problem for everyone to whom the task falls. It is to be doubted whether any parish has, in its present possession, the complete record of its history and activity since its inception. Carelessness and fire seem to be the destroying elements, whereby documents of intrinsic worth, particularly valuable to a compiler of such a work as this, have been lost forever.

From the foundation of this parish in 1816 down to the year 1831, no information, other than meagre generalities, is obtainable. The vestry minutes and church records were in the possession of the Rev. Edward K. Fowler, and were destroyed when the old Mansion House was burned. In fact no church records back of 1870 are now in existence, lost probably in the same fire.

However, the gap has been imperfectly bridged by references to family records, old scrap books, clippings, and Quinlan's "*History of Sullivan County.*"

I am particularly indebted to Major John Waller, whose keen memory at the age of 90 has enabled me to clear away many doubts regarding the past, and to present to the parish this account of its history.

This little book goes forth, doubtless, with some errors and imperfections, but it goes forth with a prayer for God's blessing upon St. John's Parish and its people, my people, friends and brethren in Christ, from their rector and its compiler.

WALTER WHITE REID



IN the fore part of the last century Sullivan County, in almost its entire extent, was a vast, undeveloped country. Settlements were few and scattered. Most of the land was yet untrodden. Dense forests, composed of giant hemlocks, covered valley and hill. These tracts of uncut timber offered strong inducements to a class of enterprising men to engage extensively in the manufacture of sole leather, to supply the active demand of New York, Boston and Philadelphia.

The first settlers straggled in somewhere between 1795 and 1800. They were courageous souls, willing to make present sacrifices for the hope of the future. They built log cabins at Sackett Lake and along the Neversink.

In 1802, Samuel Frisbee Jones of Connecticut, then living at Lebanon, New York, came into this region, at the request of the contractors, to explore the country for the proposed Newburgh - Cohecton Turnpike. So greatly was he impressed with the possibilities of development in this locality that he returned to Columbia County to enlist his brother's sympathy, looking towards the purchase of land.

The result was that Samuel, with his brother John Patterson Jones, bought a tract of almost two thousand acres, which became the site of a new village called by John P. Jones, Monticello, after the Virginia home of Thomas Jefferson. It may be remarked in passing that these men were uncles of Samuel J. Tilden.

Almost immediately, the land was parcelled off, and tempting offers made to sturdy souls to migrate to the mountain top. The prospect of a bright future brought immediate results in a large influx of population.