



## Reflections of Yesteryear

Martin Ashley, Church Historian

I was wondering what to write about for this month's issue, and tossed around a few ideas. Nothing sounded very interesting until I ran across the title of a small article from the August 11, 1963 issue of the Enquirer & News. It read:

*Presbyterians to Buy New Home for Pastor*  
*"The First Presbyterian Church will purchase a new house for its minister at 287 Central Street. The four-bedroom tri-level with study and family room is of brick and aluminum siding exterior. It is expected to be completed this fall. The decision to buy the new manse was approved at a congregational meeting following worship services Sunday morning while the minister, the Rev. Dr. Allan J. Weenink, is on vacation. The Weeninks and their four children, John, James, Judith and Jeffrey, are spending the month at their cottage on Lake Michigan near Holland. On their return, the Weeninks will choose the interior colors for their new house. The house was chosen by a manse committee of the Board of Trustees, Robert Sharp, chairman, Donald Bahlman, Mrs. Robley Covey and Mrs. Wayne L. Miller. The present manse at 199 Fremont St. will probably be sold."*

Our church had for many years provided a manse for our ministers to reside in. The first residence was at 199 Fremont Street, on the corner of Fremont and Latta Streets. This home was purchased back in 1919.

The Board of Trustees first considered the possibility of looking for a new manse in early 1963, when at the February 12, 1963 Board Meeting, the following statement was made:

*"The idea of considering the purchase of a new manse with more adequate room for the minister and his family, and more commensurate with their needs, was discussed."*

Robert Sharp headed a Manse Committee, which looked into properties that were available and also new housing that was going up on the north side of town. After five months of research and investigation the following appeared in the Board of Trustees minutes for July 16th,

*"A report was made by Mr. Sharp, in behalf of the Manse Committee, recommending purchase of a new manse property at 287 Central Street in Battle Creek at a price of \$35,500.00. Mr. Stetler indicated that the present manse could be offered for sale and should bring a price of approximately \$15,000, based on current real estate market conditions. Mr. Stetler further reported that a discussion with Mr. E. J. Swan of the Michigan National Bank indicated that there would be no difficulty in arranging financing through the Michigan National Bank by increasing the existing Church mortgage in an amount sufficient to purchase the new property. Mr. Swan had further indicated that the existing rate on interest would be applicable to the additional money to be borrowed. Based upon reports of the Manse Committee, a motion was made by McDaniel, supported by Bahlman and passed by the Board, authorizing the*

*Manse Committee to proceed with negotiations to purchase the new property, subject to the approval by the Congregation. "*

By September of 1963, plans were well under way to complete the purchase of the newly built Manse located in the new Bella Vista addition. It was reported at the October 15, 1963 Board of Trustees meeting that,

*"The Manse Committee Report was made by Sharp. The minister's family is moved but not completely settled yet. A sales agreement has been signed on the old Manse at the asking price. The first \$15,000 of proceeds from this sale would be applied against an unsecured note for that amount."*

The Central Street Manse continued to serve as our ministers' residence until the late 1990's, when it was no longer needed and was consequently sold.



Presbyterian manse, corner of Central & Pleasantview



## Youth Groups Begin Wreath Sale

Mid and Senior High Youth Groups will begin taking orders for Christmas wreaths on October 17. The wreath sales are the youth groups' main source of funding for their summer mission trips.

The wreaths this year are \$22.00 each. Please place your order with one of the kids or Rick McKire before October 31.