



## **Kerr Kronicles Volume XX**

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*Peek into the Past:* Martha C. Barr was the second wife of John C. Barr. She lived 84 years from February 24, 1813 to July 24, 1897. Her husband John, was the son of the first installed pastor, David Barr (1789-1801). Financially successful, she continued her husband's practice of making loans, at interest, to members of the congregation. She died without heirs and willed that her property be sold and the proceeds and outstanding notes be given to the Session for church use. The gift known as the Barr Fund was valued at time of transfer of \$2,952.57 and by 1901 was \$3,150.00 and was a stabilizing influence in the financial life of the church. The Session acted as a banking agency making loans, small and large, at an interest rate from 6%-8%. For most notes a mortgage deed was required. Main uses were to repair church property, dig a well at the manse, and pay for insurance for the church and manse. A loan was made to Carl and Morris McEwen to help enlarge their business. The Session voted to borrow money from the Barr Fund to supplement the pastor's salary and to buy land contiguous to the manse property. In 1915 a major renovation of the church began. When the bills came in faster than the giving, the Session decided to call in all loans from the Barr Fund and use the entire fund to pay off the debt. The building was completed and the congregation was able to move from temporary quarters in the Bain Academy into the new facilities.

Mrs. Barr is buried in the South Cemetery with a large monument noting her contribution and there is a stain glass memorial window dedicated in her memory in the chapel. In 1914, a circle named Martha Barr was created. (*The Presbyterian Gathering on Clear Creek*)

*Interesting Fact:* In 1909, the Philadelphia Sabbath School had more than 300 students with 12 classes for the Senior and Adult Department and several groups in the Primary Department. The report to the Presbytery reflected 358 members. (*The Presbyterian Gathering on Clear Creek*)

*A Musical "Note":* One member liked to remark, "We have up town singing, up town preaching and wall to wall baptism." (*The Presbyterian Gathering on Clear Creek*)

*Important National Events:* In 1903 the U.S. acquires Panama Canal Zone and the Wright brothers make the first controlled, sustained flight in heavier-than-air aircraft at Kitty Hawk, N.C.