

The
BULLETIN

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN
 CHURCH

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

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Minister



Therefore every scribe who is instructed in the kingdom of heaven, is like an householder who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. Matthew 13:52.

The latest development in the matter of preserving the old furnace as an historic monument may be stated in a few words; but it is of a distinctly encouraging nature.

Mr. Sherwood, of Montclair, one of the three members of the State Commission on Historic Sites, was in Oxford a month ago to look over the furnace situation, as stated in this paper at the time. He was good enough to give us hope for his cooperation at the time, and has since taken up the matter in a practical manner.

The Editor a week ago received a letter from him in which he says (omitting some kind personal remarks), "At your convenience I shall be glad to receive the letter you proposed to send concerning the offer of the owners of the Furnace, the plans or overtures if any, of the community and such other data as may be of interest to our Commission. Before submitting anything to the Board it would be best to have the proposition presented in a formal manner, with the facts under signature.

"Such a method of procedure ensures more interest on the part of the commissioners. I was impressed with your explanation of the history in connection with the furnace, but of course you understand the formal proposition should be presented by some one on the ground. Upon receipt of full particulars in the manner suggested I shall be pleased to present it to the Board." In reply the Editor stated that full particulars had been placed in the hands of the Chairman of the Commission, Mr. George DeB. Keim, last October. And in reply, just received, Mr. Sherwood writes,

I shall be glad to write to Mr. Keim and will recommend that the matter of Oxford Furnace be placed on our next agenda.

"I shall however be glad to receive in due course further information as to as to the possibility of a local group giving some financial aid as suggested by you in our first conference. This might be of help at the present time in reaching a more speedy conclusion because of the fact that our Commission has had its budget cut to the bone. For the present moment we have no funds for large development. "I am hopeful that through cooperation a method can be found for taking over the property."

Next week's issue will give the latest information on the subject, and also explain the local situation.

When there is no vision the people perish ---Proverbs 29:18

"O God, who hast made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the whole earth, and didst send thy blessed Son to preach peace to them that are afar off: and to them that are nigh; Grant that all men everywhere may seek after thee and find thee. Bring the nations into thy fold, and add the heathen to thine inheritance. And hasten the promised day, when at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Our next observance of the Lord's Supper will be July 14th, and after that not until October. Let us plan to make it spiritual blessing to ourselves and to others.

The Children's Day Exercises last Sabbath were enjoyed by a large audience. The new songs by the school were beautiful and sung joyously led by a double choir of the young folks of the School, the girls on the left and the boys on the right from the pews.

The recitations by the children gave pleasure to all, and some excellent talent was disclosed by even little tots.

The floral decorations were in fine taste in selection and arrangement, and the general effect was delightful.

All this on a perfect June day made the occasion very pleasant for visitors and friends, while encouraging to the school.

Ex-President Calvin Coolidge is reported to have said:

"I think the church must preach a change of heart, a new life, and a changed living. I wouldn't worry about numbers and church attendance, for in spite of the size of the congregation the message travels, and it sets the standard by which the community lives."

Copy of letter from George W. Scranton to his sister Caroline E. Scranton, at Madison, Conn. (Afterwards, Mrs. Samuel Hill).

Lackawanna Iron Works,
Feb. 21, 1846.

Dear Sister Caroline:

Your kind and truly excellent letter I received in due time and that moment determined to answer it immediately, but the time passed on a few days and a fine snow fell which I improved by paying a visit of 2 weeks to my dear family who you know I have seen but might little of for nearly 1½ years. I have not been with them over 4 weeks in 16 months. I ought to have written to you while at home but when I got there I was taken up with my sweet little children nearly all the time and then there was George Wilson wedding had to be attended too, which you have probably heard all about before this time.

My time here is taken up with constant business, my mind and all that I am, has been, together with energy and great perseverance put forth to my utmost ability to try and bring something out of this property and render it available and a profitable concern. We have had many and sore trials and great difficulties to encounter and I sometimes fear harder ones yet to come. The times are much against us. The prices for iron were never as low as they have been the past year. Our debts are heavy and some pressing. Money is very scarce and impossible to collect or borrow. I have many a time wished I had never seen this place. We should have been how out of debt (that is Selden and I) and had \$15,000. beside I think as much more and more too of this property now as I ever did. It is a great fortune and when times come right it will be worth a large sum of money and we could do well now if we had money to pay what we owe. I have always hoped and still believe we shall be able to keep it and work through with all our difficulties.

Our furnace has made a long blast. She has been running since last May. We shall blow out in March and start again in May. Our calculation is now to have Selden move here in the Spring to take the charge of this business and I shall then go home and help Charles at Oxford and be here occasionally.

Your letter afforded me much pleasure in the perusal. I was glad to hear from home and to know how all my Madison friends were getting along. You think hard of me for not writing more. I know I have delayed writing a long time to my beloved parents especially, but it is not because I think less of them than I ever did, no not by any means. I have always been desirous to aid them in any way and make them happy and comfortable in their declining years. I long to see them and hope I shall next summer be able to make a visit to my own sweet home and native village. I shall never cease to love my kind Father and Mother nor fail to acknowledge with a kind and grateful heart the innumerable temporary blessings and comforts that I have received from them in early life.

I hope to be able yet to remunerate them in some small degree for their kind care over me. Many children fall far short of doing their duty to their parents in many respects. I hope and pray this may not be my sin. I hope you will render much assistance to your kind mother and make her happy and comfortable as possible. I hope Sarah is now a great help to her. I suppose by this time Sarah is almost a young lady. If I were able I should send her to school, somewhere from home next season. Tell her she must do all she can to improve at home for the present. Perhaps we can do something for her by and by. We shall be happy to see you all at our house next summer. I intend to have your teeth fixed then and in the meantime take care to keep them clean with a good brush.

I had a delightful and pleasant visit at home with my family and friends in general in January. James Selden had grown very much. I should not have known him and of course he did not me. He would have very little to do with me anyhow. He was only 3 days old when I left home to come here first. Elizabeth and William always have remembered me and were rejoiced to see me at home once more. We had many nice plays together on the floor, and I assure you it caused the tears to make their appearance when I had to leave them. It is a great trial to me to be from home so much, and I often think I had rather be poor and hoe corn by the day than to be deprived the happiness and pleasure of my sweet little family. We hope for better things in future. The children have all got the whooping cough now. I hope they will have it lightly. Selden is now in New York. I received a letter from him today and one from Charles too, saying he had just heard from Madison and that all were well there. Mr. Grant and family with whom I live are well, Charles Mattes is now living at Wilkes Barre. We are having some of our pig iron manufactured into bar iron at Wilkes Barre at the rolling mill there and Charles M. is attending to it.

(over)

Quite a neat little church has been built here the past season on lots given by us. It was dedicated a few days since and we have had a very interesting time here. Several persons have become hopefully pious. The meetings are well attended. People that heretofore never attended church are now becoming constant attendants and manifest a desire to live and lead a better life for all times to come. I hope this state of things may continue and that we may all awake to our duty, live not as if we expected to always remain on this earth and that we may all be prepared to meet our God in peace when we shall be called to leave this world, is the prayer of your humble and affectionate brother.

I have written this letter in much haste. It is directed to you, but is for the perusal of all the family. Let me kindly be remembered to all my relatives and friends. Write to me often. Tell me all that is going on and believe me as ever your kind friend.

Well wisher and affectionate brother.
George.

Comments on the above letter by
George S. Humphrey

The "George Wilson" referred to, after having been in business for a good many years, came to Oxford late in life--in the early 1880s, I think, and was employed in the store, as was also his son "Jim" who, I believe married one of James H. Lukens' daughters, Annie, I think.

"James Selden" was the youngest child of George. For many years he was head of the firm of "James S. Scranton & Co.", who represented the Oxford Iron Co. in New York, with office and store at 81.83, 85, Washington Street. Later in life he removed to Scranton where he died. He had five children--all living--Anna (Mrs. Charles S. Sellen) of Elmira N.Y., Lizzie (Mrs. Carter Thompson) of Elmira, and William H. of Scranton. Also Katherine (Mrs. Fuller) now living in Scranton, and Grace, who lives in Montclair, N.J. "Elizabeth" afterwards married Mr. George J. Fuller, lived for many years in the house built by her father where both she and her husband died.

There is one grand-daughter of hers now living in Scranton.

"William" (Henry) spent his boyhood days in Scranton and after his graduation from the Rensselaer Institute, in Troy N.Y. came to Oxford where Selden T. had recently removed removed from Scranton, and was active in planning the rolling and nail mills, "new" furnace etc. He built the house on

the hill above the old "Manor House", and died there. His widow, Rosalie Paul removed to Belvidere, where she died a few years ago. They had no children.

You will notice that George had an idea of returning to Oxford to live; but he never did so. He soon built what for its day was a handsome residence, which stood for many years on the site now occupied by the Hotel Casey. Selden also built a house in Scranton where he lived for a number of years, then moved to Oxford and established the Oxford Iron Company.

I've omitted to say that Caroline to whom the letter is addressed, afterwards married Samuel Hill of Madison Conn. They had several children, two of whom, Selden Brown and Charles S. came to Oxford.

"Brown" was in the Iron Co's office and in charge of certain outside interests of the Co. He married Emma Winkley (now Mrs. George Weber). Charles had charge of the Company's Pattern Shop. He died about 1880.

We have printed the letter of George Scranton in full. It is a valuable historical document both for Oxford and for Scranton, Pa. Mr. Humphrey read excerpts from it at the last reunion, and has kindly supplied us with a complete copy with his helpful comments. It proves that George Scranton was closely associated with the Oxford Furnace Company from the time of the purchase in 1839 to the time of his death in 1861. This in connection with a letter he wrote about the furnace explosion in 1857, also in the possession of Mr. Humphrey. It emphasizes the fact that Oxford men founded and launched upon its great career the city of Scranton, Pa.

The site of Scranton a hundred years ago was a wilderness, called Slocum's Hollow, with only a grist and a saw mill.

The heroic struggles of the Scrantons to make a success of the new Iron Works there are vividly indicated in this letter.

For apart from the financial difficulties spoken of in the letter, we know that they were at first handicapped by the fact that the iron ore and lime stone were of an inferior quality, and this defect had to be overcome before they could hope for success. But Mr. Scranton's prophecy was more than fulfilled, but as he died at the age of 50 he did not live to see how much more greatly it was exceeded.

The letter is also a beautiful human document that is well worth studying.



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