

286

Deed for old furnace given
to New Jersey Commission of
Historic Sites

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.

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.-----Jeremiah 6:16

" Almighty God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

The Ladies Annual Fair is set for the first week in December. Exact day will be announced next issue. The prize contest has been started. The collectors are Mrs Chas. Anderson and Mrs George DeVries.

P.T.A. Tuesday Night at School

"The New Jersey Zinc Co, of Franklin N.J. will present a demonstration of Common Fire Hazard at our meeting on Nov. 12, at 8 P.M. in school building.

It is on Fire Prevention in the Home; a fine demonstration, with a lecture."

--By Mrs Frances Meyers
President.

No Sunday Sale of Liquors

The local election last Tuesday resulted for Sabbath observance and sobriety. The vote was on the question of permitting the sale of intoxicating beverages on Sunday in this community? There were 211 for and 282 against, a difference of 71 votes. It goes into effect immediately, according to the statute of the State.

The total vote was 668 the largest on record for many years, thus showing the great local interest. But 175 did not vote on the question.

The result is very gratifying to the people with the best interests of the community at heart.

C. J. G.

Old Furnace Deeded to the State

Last Thursday we received a letter from Mr. Marple, Director of the Commission on Historic Sites, in which he says:

"I wish to advise you that the Commission has received from the Warren Foundry & Pipe Corporation a deed to the property located in Oxford, on which the Furnace is situated."

This official notification must give great satisfaction to the citizens of Oxford and the host of friends of the plan to have it made an outstanding public monument of historic importance.

However the Commission made the fact public in a dispatch to the New York Times of last Sunday, which carried a large picture of the furnace as it stood fifty years ago, under which was the caption "Historic Iron Works Acquired by the State of New Jersey," and notes of its historic place.

This was followed by a long article, evidently prepared by the Commission, which will be read with pleasure by those who have not seen it elsewhere.

Edgewater Park, N. J., Nov. 2nd.--

"The old Oxford Blast Furnace in Oxford, Warren County, where Cannon balls were cast during the Revolutionary War, and which, in 1839, passed into the hands of George and Selden Scranton, for whom the city of Scranton, Pa. was named, will be restored as the only historic industrial plant owned and preserved by the State of New Jersey.

Old military headquarters inns, mansions and birthplaces publicly owned and maintained, dot New Jersey from the Delaware River to the Hudson.

"The furnace, however, will be unique as it will be a memorial to the rise and development of American industry.

Thomas Marple of Edgewater Park announced yesterday that the deed for the property had been received from its owners the Warren Foundry and Pipe Company, which has a plant in Phillipsburg and offices in New York. Thus the furnace passes as a gift to the State, and comes under the jurisdiction of the New Jersey Commission on Historic Sites, of which Mr. Marple is the director.

"Plans for the restoration of the furnace probably will be made under the supervision of Seymour Williams of Rahway, director in this State of the Historic American Buildings Survey.

"No decision has been made as yet whether to restore the plant as it was in Revolutionary times, or as it appeared, after years of change and improvement, in 1884, when the furnace was blown out.

"The furnace was erected in 1741 by Jonathan Robeson of Philadelphia. Its stack was in the form of a truncated pyramid, about thirty feet high. Since the furnace stood at the foot of a steep hill, the stock house stood on the level of the furnace top so the charging barrows could be trundled directly to the tunnel-head.

"The blast, which was cold, was supplied by a leather bellows actuated by water power from a stream now called Furnace Brook.

There was one tuyere, to which the air was conveyed, through a leather bustle-pipe. The tuyere itself consisted of a clay pipe, which was frequently renewed.

"A long fore hearth was covered by an iron plate, which was removed from time to time, and the slag skimmed off. When the hearth was full the smelted iron was dipped out with ladles."

Thus after more than three years of effort to have the old furnace recognized as an important historic object, and to have it properly cared for in the future, we have reached the final stage with confidence that it will be properly restored and maintained as a national shrine.

It may be of interest to state the most significant steps taken to reach this goal. The first record of any effort to have the furnace made a public monument was a letter written by Mr. Charles J. Post, now of the Department of Labor in Washington, to the American Historical Society at Washington, urging the merits of the furnace to be preserved as a monument of our national history. But apparently nothing else was done until in June 1932, (Mr. Post's letter was written in 1919) when the editor received a letter from Mr. George S. Humphrey, the last manager of the old furnace, in which he told of having an article in "Mining and Metallurgy" (a magazine published by the Society of Iron Miners) describing the historic interests of the furnace. And in the letter to the Editor he expressed the conviction that the furnace would become an object of national interest, and that he was planning to bring here some men to examine into the matter of properly preserving the furnace for the future.

(over)

M. Humphrey carried out this plan in November 1932, bringing Ralph E Case Vice-president of the international Nickel Company of N.Y. City, and J.S. Vanick and E. J. Bothwell, both connected with the same Co. They became deeply interested in the movement and helped materially in the outcome.

In the meantime articles appeared almost weekly in the Bulletin creating general interest in the matter.

In the next year, 1933, one vital step was made by the efforts of Mr. Humphrey, who took up the matter with Mr. Leonard Peckitt, president of the Warren Foundry & Pipe Corp., and as a result Mr. Peckitt called a meeting of his directors who authorized him to deed the furnace to any proper Society able to maintain it in the future.

During 1934 Mr. Humphrey made many efforts to get the personal assistance of noted iron men, all of whom were in full sympathy with the plan, but nothing came out of it.

About 14 months ago the Editor had a conversation, over the phone, with Dr. Charles DeB. Keim, President of the State Commission on Historic Sites.

He expressed his interest in it most cordially, and requested that all possible facts be sent him. This was done by Mr. Humphrey and the writer.

When Dr. Keim received these Data he wrote that he would take the matter up with the Commission at the next meeting.

Early in 1935, Mr. Richard Gruendyke of the Washington N.J. Star, began writing the furnace merits for the Star which generously gave much space to publicise the good cause. And Mr. Gruendyke wrote personally to the members of the Commission urging the matter upon them; all replied most encouragingly. Mr. Louis Sherwood even arranged to come and view the furnace which was done, and later brought Mr. Thomas Marple, the director here in July. The Commission then made up its mind and we were asked to send a petition of our citizens which was most heartily done by all.

The Commission then applied to Mr. Peckitt for the deed, which was sent to the Commission a few days ago. As we look back over the last three or four years, we are the most grateful for many friends who expressed their interest and gave encouragement of ultimate success.



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