

The
BULLETIN

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH


OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

A. G. YOUNT
Minister



Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.—Deuteronomy, 32:7.



Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.-----Isaiah 40:30-31

"Hear Our prayers, O Lord, and consider our desires. Give unto us true humility, a meek and quiet spirit, a loving and a friendly, a holy and a useful manner of life; Bearing the burdens of our neighbors, denying ourselves, and striving to benefit others, and to please thee in all things. Grant us to be righteous in performing promises, loving to our relatives, careful of our charges; to be gentle and easy to be entreated, slow to anger, and readily prepared for every good work. Amen"

The annual Fair and Supper that has for many years been held by our ladies in the first week of December should have the hearty support of all. The exact date will be announced later.

The Union Thanksgiving Meeting will be held on Wednesday evening November 25th, instead of on Thanksgiving morning as first announced. A more attractive program has been arranged. The Choirs of both the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches will combine in leading the singing and in giving special music. It ought to be well attended, and an impressive service.

Our local industries, for the most part, are now active; some on part time, and others steadily. It is reported that preparations are being made to begin mining iron ore in the near future. The ore is not smelted here but shipped to the Alan Wood Steel Works in Conshohocken, Pa. We trust it may so turn out, as it will employ many of our local citizens profitably.

We have before us two interesting old pictures, one of the Company store and the other of the mansion house. The large picture of the Company Store belongs to Miss Myra Radel, and was originally got by her sister Mrs. Jennie Radel Hardess, who is now visiting in Oxford. It is dated on the back, June 30th, 1894.

The view is taken from the North West and shows the entire edifice.

In front of the portico are standing 9 men and a boy. Miss Radel has given us their names thus: Edward T. Lukens; Wm. Sparrow; Edmund Perkins; Fred Bigelow; Victor Thompson; Fred Fowler; Henry Scherrer; Jake Zapp; Charles Creveling; and the boy Tommy Meyers. Mrs. Hardess was standing inside the office window and one arm and shoulder is visible. She was the Secretary to Mr. Lukens, who was General Superintendent of the iron Company. Mr. Perkins and Mr. Sparrow were employed in the office; Mr. Thompson book-keeper for the Store; Mr. Fowler had charge of the Dry Goods department; Messrs Bigelow and Mr. Scherrer in the Grocery department; Mr. Zapp in the shoe department and Mr. Creveling was manager of the Store. A great elm tree on the north side overshadowed that side of the building. Besides the main porch was another in front of Mr. Lukens's Office. An iron fence ran from the south end of the main porch southward about 15 feet from the building, and the enclosed yard was a lawn in which young shade trees were standing. No signs were visible except on front window in large letters, "Eat Quaker Oats!"

The picture of the Mansion house is much older, and the original belongs to Mr. Humphrey. It shows the corner of the Store building and two of the porch pillars. A horse and buggy stands at this corner and on the porch by the horse are two ladies. A side of the old stone Post Office is shown covered with big posters. The front gate was not then in use, as it was boarded up. There seems to have been many large arbors for roses etc. It is a fine and valuable picture, and we wish it could be more nearly dated.

The long period during which Dr. Shippen was the sole owner of the Furnace was affected by two persons, who must now be described because they were closely related to the furnace history in that period. These were Jacob Starn and Joseph W. Shippen, the son of Dr. Shippen.

Jacob Starn leased and operated the furnace for ten or more years, beginning on or before 1762. The Shippens who then owned the property were not practical iron men, and it became necessary to have an experienced iron master to operate it. The leading man of that type in the region was Jacob Starn who had long before built and successfully managed the Greenwich Forge at what is now Warren Glen. The Furnace was then leased to Starn on a profit sharing basis; Starn to receive 5/8 and the owners 3/8 of the net profits.

There is proof that Starn continued to manage the furnace until after 1771, and probably several years later. During this period Starn became an important citizen of what was then Sussex County, and controlled the iron business in the region of Warren Co.

It was in this way: About 1760 he sold 2/3 interest in the Greenwich Forge and lands to John S. Hughes of Philadelphia, for his son Hugh Hughes.

In 1762 John Hughes bought also 2/3 interest in the Changewater Forge and lands of Jonathan Robeson; and it also included Mr. Robeson's contract with the Shippens by which the latter was to supply 100 tons of pig iron annually to Robeson for the Changewater Forge. Hughes in 1765 sold all his 2/3 interest in Changewater Forge and lands with the pig Iron contract to Starn. Thus Starn had the furnace and the two forges, for he remained manager of the Greenwich Forge, getting in all the profits of the furnace lease including the 100 ton contract, 2/3 gain of the Changewater Forge and 1/3 part of the Greenwich Forge. He was fixed to become a wealthy man; but it appears that he did not succeed in that plan. For after his death the County sued his estate for nonpayment of 1/3 of 200 pounds lent to the Co. by the State or Province, in 1766, for the bread famine in the County at that time. Starn was one of the Committee of three appointed (over)

to distribute the money. The suit was brought in 1782, some time after Starn's death. Besides this, in the Will of Dr. Wm. Shippen made in 1783, there is a bequest of 800 pounds, which was awarded to Dr. Shippen by the Appellate court of New Jersey, against the estate of Jacob Starn deceased. Evidently Starn fell far behind in the payment of Dr. Shippen's rental of the furnace.

But Starn was ambitious in a political way. He was elected Sheriff of Sussex County in 1766, and in 1768 he got himself appointed one of the County Justices. But the next year the appointment was revoked by the Provincial Council when a committee of Sussex County citizens brought charges to the effect that Starn was unsuited to the office.

However Starn was reappointed Justice in 1772 by the Governor.

He seemed to have much trouble in keeping his workmen at his forges, who were mostly "Redemptioners" and were called servants in his advertisements for their recapture.

There is record of about six such runaways, and he offered considerable rewards for their return. Also while Sheriff he advertised for an escaped prisoner. These facts indicate that while Starn was a capable iron master he had deficiencies of training and character which in the end brought him difficulties and loss in standing and influence, if not in wealth.

There is one very serious point that we have failed to clear up, and it is this: If Starn was still operating the furnace by lease after the breaking out of the Revolutionary war, what attitude did he take toward it? Was he a Tory sympathizer? If so this fact may account for the tradition that at first the owners of the furnace were not loyal to the Revolution.

We know that the owner, Dr. Shippen was from the beginning of the War a devoted patriot; but if Starn was not then he could possibly have made difficulties in the use of the furnace for war materials. We hope to be able to find evidence on this matter that will enable us to clear it up. For it is the only shadow remaining upon the subject.



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