

First Settler in Oxford  
 John Oxford 1726  
 You N. Searcy - Shooting  
 barrel in company office

# 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.

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Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord might dwell among them.

Psalm 68:18

"Almighty God who hast granted unto our country liberty, and established our nation in righteousness by the people's will: Guide and direct the multitudes whom thou hast ordained in power, by thy pure wisdom and thy just laws; that their counsels may be filled with knowledge and equity, and the whole estate of the Commonwealth be preserved in peace, unity, strength, and honor; that the people may prosper in freedom beneath an equal law, and our Nation may magnify thy Name in all the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord

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Next Sabbath, July 11th, we will observe our summer Communion service at the morning hour of worship, 10:30.

Opportunity will be given for such persons as may desire to be admitted to the Lord's Supper and become members of our Church. The Session will meet directly after Sunday School.

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At the morning service last Sabbath, the infant daughter, Mary Ellen of Harmon and Anna Hoffman, was presented for Christian baptism.

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Mr. Earl Sharps has presented the church with two handsome flower baskets of the latest type. They will give pleasure to all, and add to the attraction of the floral offerings.

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Mr. Weston reports that the notice in the Bulletin recently of his approaching birthday, resulted in his receiving 75 cards and letters of congratulation; which gave him great delight. The Bulletin will be glad to make similar announcements of the kind.



### John Axford's Will

John Axford was the first settler in Oxford, coming here about 1726.

He built a log cabin near the great spring, which he replaced, in 1758 by a stone cottage that still stands, and which was long occupied by Col. Charles Scranton.

In the New Jersey Archives, volume 34, there is an abstract of John Axford's Will which was made in the year 1737, March 17. Axford died in 1771 and the Will was proved Jan. 1. 1772. The witnesses were Thomas Van Horn, Richard Shackleton, John Thompson and John Jewel. The Estate was valued at 198 Pounds, 16 Shillings and 10 Pence (about \$1000.)

There was a bequest of 40 Shillings for a stone wall around the graveyard called Hardwick. It is near Allamuchy, and belonged to the Friends Society. He was buried there.

His four sons were Abraham, John Samuel and Jonathan. Axford at first had 1600 acres of land, and before the will was made he had given farms to his sons. His daughter Martha was the wife of Joseph W. Shippen and lived in the old Mansion House.

Axford is important not only as the first settler but because his name suggested the name of Oxford, so similar in spelling and pronouncing.

### Hillside Cemetery

Mr. James Thomas sends this note "Was glad to see Mr. Weston's response in the last Bulletin, to the call for volunteers regarding fixing up Hillside Cemetery. His suggestions were fine and trust we may have more.

I have thought that a small lot assessment from each lot owner would help to bear any necessary expense, such as stone for drives and labor if necessary. But believe many of the Oxford people would volunteer their services free of charge.

Hope a committee can soon be appointed to start the ball rolling.

I am also willing to help with the work, and my contribution is ready any time."

### The Store Burglary, Again.

The previous accounts in the Bulletin about the attempt to rob the Company Store over sixty years ago, were made from the recollections of men recently living. But we are now able to give the facts from the original sources. For Mr. George R. Searing, grandson of William Searing the hero of the occasion, has put in our hands the fine pistol which the Company presented to Mr. Searing and also a scrap book containing many clippings from news papers of the time. The date is fixed by the inscription on the revolver:- "Presented to William H. Searing, by the Oxford Iron Company as a tribute to gallant discharge of duty, October 23rd 1875."

Of the many accounts in the news papers we select the one giving the story in Mr. Searing's own words, the storiest and most graphic account of all. His story as taken down by a reporter is the following:--

"In 1875 I was in the employ of the Oxford Iron Company; my business being to watch the store and offices of the concern at night. The place was rather a lonesome one and I had as assistants just as nice a bull terrier dog as you ever saw, and a Smith & Weston six shooter. The place had never been cracked that I knew of but as there were large sums of money in the safe at times, I never allowed my vigilance to relax.

The night of October 23, 1875, was dark and gloomy, just such a one as would give any one the fidgets.

About midnight I went my usual rounds, accompanied by Major—that was my dog's name, and after returning to the office went down stairs to cut some wood with which to light a fire in the secretary's room.

After filling my basket with kindlings I was ascending the stairs when Major, who was just ahead of me began to growl and snap. I knew something was wrong, so I dropped the basket on the step, and taking out my revolver, proceeded carefully into the main office. The first thing I saw was a man crouched under the counter near the safe. I had time to see that his face was covered with a mask, but without waiting for further evidences of his intentions, I pointed my pistol at him and let go.

The Organ Repair Fund is now near \$100. and we meet with good will and encouragement on all sides.

Full reports next week.



A howl, accompanied by a curse, was his only reply. Just at that moment I was confronted by another man wearing a mask, who made straight for me. Before I could fire a second shot, I received a blow on my head which stunned me, but did not knock me down. I fired again. Another man then grabbed me, and I cried as lustily as ever man cried for help.

Major had evidently been frightened by the firing and ran down stairs into the cellar, and the two burglars and myself had it all alone for some time. Finally they got me down on the floor, and while one of them held me the other put a handcuff on one of my wrists. As they were trying to secure my other hand I heard Major coming up stairs, and taking advantage of the sounds made by him I sang out 'Come on Mr. Gray, but don't shoot.' The Burglars thought assistance was coming and after taking my revolver from me they tore out of the office and jumped from a window into the yard. As soon as they had left I went to the porch and cried 'murder' when a fellow who had been sleeping off a drunk near by came to my aid. Mr. Gray of the Company arrived soon after.

The burglar at whom I fired the first shot lay dead in the corner. The bullet had passed through his body near enough to the heart to cause almost instant death....

The town people made a great fuss about the manner in which I foiled the robbers, and the Company presented my with a revolver....

The people gave me a set of complimentary resolutions, and I soon after was made postmaster of the town, a position which I held until the change came in politics, and then I had to go." (Ten years?)

He was a Civil War veteran, and a prominent member of the John F. Reynolds Post, No. 66, of Washington, N.J.

at the close of the war he came to Oxford and got a job as watchman. About 1895 he left Oxford and got a position in the State Hospital at Morris Plains, and after five years retired and lived with his daughter in Jersey City, where he died Aug. 5. 1906, and was buried at Dover his native town.



**CHURCH OFFICERS**

*The Session*

A. G. YOUNT, *Moderator*

*Elders*

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EDWARD T. GREEN

ELISHA B. FOSS  
LEWIS BERGENBACK



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GEORGE DOCKER, JR.  
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*Church Treasurer*

LEWIS E. GREEN



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<i>Assistant Superintendent</i> .....	CHRIS SEIPLE
<i>Secretary</i> .....	ALVIN RENNER
<i>Treasurer</i> .....	MERRILL FOSS
<i>Organist</i> .....	MISS RUTH SNYDER
<i>Assistant Organist</i> .....	MISS ALICE BELL



*Ladies' Aid Society*

<i>President</i> .....	MRS. A. G. YOUNT
<i>Vice-President</i> .....	MRS. BENJAMIN GREEN
<i>Secretary</i> .....	MRS. RAYMOND RUSH
<i>Treasurer</i> .....	MRS. LEWIS E. GREEN

*Choir*

*Leader* ..... MRS. E. T. GREEN

