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The
BULLETIN

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

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Minister



Oxford Historical Record

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

-----Joel 3:28

"Our Heavenly Father, enable us, we pray thee, to labor diligently and faithfully, not with eye-service but in singleness of heart, remembering that without thee we can do nothing, and that in thy fear is the beginning of wisdom. May we set thy holy will ever before us and do that which is well-pleasing in thy sight, that so our work here may count for good to others, both now and in the days to come. Open our eyes to know thy marvellous works, to search our own spirits, and to understand the great things of thy law. Of thy great goodness pour into our hearts the excellent gift of charity, that we may walk in meekness, truth and purity, and so glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Lowe - Lane

On Saturday June 18th, at 4.P.M., Willard George Lane and Jane Elnora Lowe, were united in marriage on the lawn of the handsome brick mansion, once the home of Selden T. Scranton. The parties live in New Rochelle, Westchester County, N.Y. They are the friends of the family of Dr. Reis, who has charge of the property, and having visited here were so delighted with the place that they decided to celebrate their wedding here. Perhaps such an event has not been seen there since the time of the Scrantons. The day was perfect and the lawns were very beautiful; and with the full forms of wedding and formal ritual, it was an impressive ceremony.

A singular coincidence, was that the bride and her family were born and raised in Indiana, as also some of the guests. As the Pastor and wife were from the same state, it was in the nature of a reunion.

Hillside Cemetery

Mr. Weston sends remarkably good news about the Cemetery. It is that the Warren Foundry & Pipe Corp. is willing to deed more land for the Cemetery. It concerns the right-angle triangle which cuts into the east side of the cemetery in a very strange manner. Those who see a map of the cemetery will understand.

The writer was puzzled at such a bizarre shape for it, until some one explained it as having been on account of an important company building located there when the cemetery was set off for the public, in 1870.

We believe that it was an engine house of some kind, which has long ago disappeared. If this angle becomes the property of the Association, it will mean that the east line of the cemetery along the road will be practically straight, and end take in a large tract of level ground which is now an eye-sore of rubbish and brushwood.

Mr. Weston has done and continues to do splendid work for the Cemetery.

Mr James Thomas grows enthusiastic over the progress made, and writes this appeal to support it.

"I have just received information of the great progress made in improving the cemetery, for which I feel grateful. This letter also asks for a contribution to the work, which of course is very necessary in a project of this kind. I hope that some of the old residents of Oxford will take note and send contributions to the Treasurer, as I am doing. This will encourage them to keep the ball rolling. Let us show our continued interest in this excellent work."

The first installment of the history of our church is printed in this issue. Succeeding parts will be published from time to time, when there are no contributions by others.

This is stated in order that those who write or plan to write for the paper will not put it off but send them on, and they will be given first place. For we fear many will not care to read historical matter.

History of Oxford 2nd. Presbyterian Church

To relate fully the story of the Oxford Presbyterian Church, it will be necessary to go back 200 years to the first generation of settlers in this region. The Indians were then in the land; the Lenni Lenape, a sub-tribe of the Delawares.

Just how early the white people began to settle here cannot be determined definitely. The first positive date is 1724, when Daniel Dupui settled just above the Delaware Gap.

Another clue is found in the fact that John Axford, who settled in Oxford in 1726, gave the name to the territory from here to the Delaware River. For in the records of New Brunswick Presbytery in 1740 (about the Oxford First Church (Hazen) was called Axford and Oxford. So that John Axford must have been the first settler in the region, which was called after him; and which Scotch and Scotch-Irish would pronounce "Oxford," the probable origin of the name.

As 200 years later this territory had many white settlers, it is fair to conclude that most of them came during that period.

The population was made up of several nationalities; Dutch and Huguenots from the Hudson region via the upper Delaware River; the Scotch and Scotch-Irish and Germans from South Jersey and Penna., and some Quakers, like John Axford, who were English.

The remarkable thing about these white pioneers was that they were nearly all Presbyterians under various church names. A fact that for over a century explains why the dominant church of this region continued to be Presbyterian.

The first clear and positive information about these early settlers is in the year 1744, when the Oxford First Church petitioned the Presbytery to send them a ministerial supply.

That means that there was a goodly number of Presbyterian people in the community, and that they probably had erected a log church in which to worship. But for a picture of their hunger for religious services, and perhaps too for social fellowship, we can only consult the Journal of David Brainerd, the famous Indian

(over)

Missionary, stationed at Martin's Creek, or as it was then called "The Forks of the Delaware."

He settled there in 1744, and he apparently preached to the white settlers almost as often as to the Indians. Think of a crowd of white people gathering about him in mid-winter to hear him preach both morning and afternoon, and that out-doors!

But here is his record for Feb. 17, 1745. (The Lord's Day).

"Preached to the white people in the wilderness, upon the sunny side of a hill; had a considerable assembly, consisting of people who lived, at least many of them, not less than thirty miles asunder; some of them came near twenty miles. I discoursed to them all day... There were many tears in the assembly; I doubt not but the Spirit of God was there, convincing poor sinners of their need of Christ." And two months later, April 14th, he "preached to a considerable assembly of white people, gathered from all parts round about."

If Brainerd did not have great success with his Indians "in the Forks of the Delaware, (It was in South Jersey, near Cranbury, that he had amazing success in converting Indians) he certainly made a great impression upon the white people, especially those in what is now Warren County. The inspiration of his sermons must have stirred profoundly the religious feelings of the people

Nor can this fact be dissociated from the circumstance that three congregations--at Woodhouse, Greenwich, and Oxford First--all at that period sought ministers from the Presbytery. It is known that Brainerd preached frequently to these congregations, in addition to the gatherings of the people at Martin's Creek on occasions like the above.

(Note. In Bulletin No. 278, is a statement of the mighty influence of Brainerd, in stirring religious and missionary zeal all over the world.)

(To be continued)



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