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*The*  
**BULLETIN**

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

A. G. YOUNT  
*Minister*



**Oxford Historical Record**

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

--- Philipians 1:29

"O God, thou great Redeemer of mankind, our hearts are tender in the thought of thee, for in all the afflictions of our race thou hast been afflicted, and in the sufferings of thy people it was thy body that was crucified. Thou hast been wounded by our transgressions and bruised by our iniquities and all our sins are laid at last on thee. Amid the groaning of creation we behold thy spirit in travail till the sons of God shall be born in freedom and holiness.

We pray thee, O Lord, for the graces of a pure and holy life, that we may no longer add to the dark weight of the world's sin that is laid upon thee, but ma share with thee in thy redemptive Work. Amen"

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The next issue of the Bulletin will be on August 14th.

By neglecting to consult the Calendar last week the announcements were badly confused.

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Mr. Clement H. Brigham sends this interesting note:-

"It may be of interest to you and the readers of the Bulletin to know that Mother celebrated her Ninety-Sixth Birth-day Anniversary last Monday (July 25th). Mother's birth-day parties are looked forward to annually by all members of her family with a great deal of interest. At this celebration about twenty of the immediate members of the family were in attendance.

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Mrs Loder writes:

George Humphrey has his 82nd birthday on August 1st. I know he'd love to have cards from his Oxford friends."

This card came too late for the issue of the 24th. Please send such notices two weeks before.

Mr. Weston writes:--

"I note that Mrs. Amelia S. Decker, Sussex, N.J. wrote you for some Bulletins. Besides being active in the D.A.R. she wrote a booklet entitled, "The Old Mine Road," (which ran from about Branchville to Port Jervis in the early days) illustrated with many old homes, and altogether it is very interesting.

This road I believe was the first built in the U. S. I am under the impression she is also a member of the N.J. Historical Society, and I have an idea that she will contribute something for the Bulletin."

Since the above note arrived we have received from Mrs. Decker a donation to the Bulletin Fund, and she adds this important item:--

"You know doubtless that there is some interesting history about the camping of Gen. Sullivan's soldiers camping at Oxford in 1779 when they went into the Campaign in Pennsylvania."

The Editor does not know anything about such an event, and if Mrs. Decker will kindly supply information in the matter it would be heartily welcomed, as indeed other historical items she may be willing to furnish the Bulletin.

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Last Wednesday Messers Herbert N. Moffett, Michael S. Stillman, and Walter E. Rutt, officers of the Historic Buildings Survey for N.J. were in Oxford, studying our local Colonial structures, and the special matter of the reconstruction of the old furnace. They will have charge of the PWA labor work in the restoration when it is undertaken, which is expected to be done this year.

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We have to thank Mrs. Gehman for the "Name and address of Roy Koon, who lived on Church street with his father and sisters. I believe Roy and one sister are the only surviving members of that family. Bulletins will be sent to Mr. Koon with the hope he become interested in the reunions and the Bulletin.

## Lighting The Blast Furnace By Anna Badrow Gehman

The lighting of the blast furnace was an interesting event in Oxford. It meant that the furnace, which had been shut down for repairs and relining, was about to be "blown in" and started in the routine of another period of pig iron production. Before the furnace could be "blown in" it had to be "blown out." As much as possible of the melted iron and slag was drawn off. A certain amount of unmelted or chilled metal always remained in the bottom of the furnace after the blast was turned off. This is called "salamander" and had to be removed by blasting.

After this was accomplished and the furnace became cooled, the old lining was replaced by a new one composed of the best quality of fire brick laid in a fire clay mortar. A wood fire was made to dry the furnace thoroughly; and now the work of filling the furnace began.

Plenty of wood was placed in the bottom, sometimes in the form of a scaffold, followed by a layer of coke and alternate layers of ore, limestone and coke until it was filled to within about ten feet of the top.

The furnace was now ready to be "blown in". The blowing in or lighting of the furnace, like the launching of a ship, had its special ceremony. During the time when Messers S. Norton, S. B. Patterson and H. B. Cox were the managers, the ladies who had the honor of the lighting were, in order, Lillian Carson, Anna Badrow, Nellie Martin and Madelene Docker.

At the appointed time, visitors and workmen assembled in the Cast House. A torch had been fastened to the end of a long pole and given to the lady. She carried this over the sandy floor to the iron notch, and then, amid the good wishes of all present for a long and prosperous "run," applied the lighted torch to the kindling inside the furnace, and held it there until the crackling and roaring of the fire assured us that the furnace was actually fired.

Then the tuyeres were put in place, the air blast turned on and the whistles blown to announce the

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news that the plant was again started.

This event was always a cause for rejoicing. The Company Store managed for a period by Edward Green, Florence Vosseller and Bertha Lapelt, would find their sales increasing; especially their "Standard assortment of candy" and dinner pails, made with a compartment for carrying coffee and used by the workmen.

A familiar figure around the stock tracks and iron wharf was the busy weigh-master, Roy Koon, son of the chief clerk, as he checked the hundreds of cars of incoming raw material and the out-going cars loaded with pig-iron.

Mr Walter Docker, the Outside Foreman, was known to the office workers as the "walking encyclopaedia", because he carried so much information in his little book and could answer all our questions.

Mads Skov was the genial foreman of the labor gang, and although he may have had a hundred men in his group, he knew every face and name.

Another important person was the driver of the Company's horse and buggy. Mr. Levi Tice. Many a trip he and the horse, Frank, made to Washington to meet trains, and to carry the pay roll from the R.R. Station to the office.

The steady droning of the blast furnace, shriek of whistles and the clang of locomotive bells made a welcome sound and a regular part of our life in Oxford in those years.

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Mrs Gehman's paper will be read with pleasure by all, especially by those who lived here at the period indicated, about 25 years ago.

Of course the furnace used at that time was not the old one which did not operate after 1884, but the large furnace south of the slag mountain, which has since then been dismantled. The description of the formal rite of lighting the furnace fire is very interesting, to the Editor at least, who had never heard of it before. Perhaps others will recall additional memories of such events.



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