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The
BULLETIN

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

A. G. YOUNT
Minister



Oxford Historical Record

I returned, and saw under the sun,
that the race is not to the swift,
nor the battle to the strong,
neither yet bread to the wise, nor
yet riches to men of understanding
nor yet favor to men of skill; but
time and chance happeneth to them
all. -----Ecclesiastes, 9:11

"Grant, O Lord, that this day
which thou hast given unto us in
mercy, may be returned unto thee in
service: As thou hast guarded us
during the helpless hours of sleep,
so do thou guide us during the ap-
pointed hours of labor; that all
our tasks may be gladly and faith-
fully performed, as in thy sight;
that our burdens may not be too
heavy for us, because thine aid and
comfort are with us continually;
and that in nothing may we displease
thee or injure one another. But if
in anything we fail or come short,
through ignorance or weakness, O
God, let thy fatherly wisdom correct
us, and thine infinite mercy for-
give us, and thy divine love amend
our fault; through Jesus Christ our
Saviour. Amen."

A card from Mr. Weston says he
has been spending a vacation at
Cape Cod, with his daughter and
grand-son, and friends.

Mr. Humphrey is up in the Adiron-
dacks, with his daughter's family,
Mrs. L. S. B. Hadley, where he plans
to remain for several weeks.

The Bulletin sends greetings to
these and all other readers who
may be fortunate enough to enjoy
a summer vacation in pleasant
surroundings.

Mr. Aitkin does the honors in this
this issue. His paper is a model
of the kind; well written and pleas-
ant to read. But it constitutes a
valuable record of our local
school history. We hope Mr. Atwood
Miss Lanterman and other former
teachers will write their exper-
iences of teaching in Oxford.

School Fifty Years Ago

By Charles S. Aitkin, Trenton, N. J.

Oxford was first brought to my attention during the summer of 1884 after completing the previous school year at Martins Creek and Stewartsville. At the latter place I met Mr. Robert S. Price, for many years the county superintendent of schools for Warren County.

By appointment I called on Mr. Albert H. Skinner at his house in Jonestown. At that time he was the Principal of the Brick school house known as district No. 32.

After a lengthy interview, which satisfied me that he was a real educator, we called upon the members of the district school board, Messrs Charles B. Weston, Isaac F. Ward and Theodore P. Burd; each identified with the Oxford Iron and Nail Company.

Mr. Weston was superintendent of the Nail factory, Mr. Ward with the clerical offices, and Mr. Burd in the cooperage department.

In due course I was notified of my selection as assistant to Mr. Skinner.

Late one hot Saturday afternoon I arrived at Oxford on the caboose of a coal train, having missed connection with the passenger at Manunka Chunk.

I was met by Mr. Andrew M. Ryan, then the station agent, who escorted me to the Fowler house which became my home during my residence in Oxford.

It was kept by Mrs. Ellen A. Fowler (nee Scranton of Connecticut), a genial soul, who did all she could to render her guests happy; mothered us, made a real home for a lot of young fellows, who, I fear, didn't fully realize what she was doing for us. She was assisted by her daughter Miss Martha J. Fowler.

The following day, Sunday, I had my first view of the Pequest valley looking toward Jenny Jump mountain, which became the forerunner of my attachment for Oxford. And now fifty years later lures me that way now and then.

On Monday, I think September 10th, I made my way toward the school house, being greeted by Rev. Gline as I passed the parsonage.

Shortly I was introduced to the other teachers, Miss Mary Gorgas, Miss Josie Johansen, Miss Martha Shaffer, Miss Lizzie Ward; and we six constituted the teaching force. In short order we were at work. The school was well organized, for Mr. Skinner was a real schoolmaster, and I acknowledge my indebtedness to him for advice and suggestions.

That was previous to the development of the public school system into grades. Oxford practically had it through the expertness of its guiding hands.

We worked together, and as I look back, feel that the pupils received a scholastic training worth while.

The school was well filled and seats too few; so when the parochial school in connection with St. Rose R. C. Church ceased and the children entered our school, we were hard pressed to accommodate the pupils.

And too, when the works were idle, the boys enrolled, and at times the pupils were divided into groups, not all in attendance the same day.

And so things went along for three years, when Mr. Skinner became principal of the school at Hackettstown, and I succeeded him in Oxford.

Occasionally changes were effected in the teaching force, so that at differing years Misses Carrie and Phebe Lanterman became teachers, as also Charles Jones and Horation S. Sliker. Interest in the school both by its patrons and the community was manifest, so the years passed satisfactorily.

The greatest drawback at that period was lack of a library, which was met in a small way. Gradually through the efforts of Mr. Skinner a few books were procured, purchased with funds raised by a small fee charged at Commencement exercises.

So some supplementary readers, a few histories, and physical apparatus were added to the school's equipment as means permitted. (Over)

At that time pupils furnished their own books; the present system of free text books was not then in vogue.

Incidentally the Pittengerville, or Dutch Hill, as it was commonly called, school was taught by Mr. Frank J. Atwood and Miss Olive Shaffer.

Late in the fall of 1891 I was obliged by sickness to resign, and at the close of the year was succeeded by Mr. Atwood, who later became county superintendent, which position is now held by his son Will G. Atwood.

Greatly to my regret I withdrew from Oxford where many friendships were formed and continue until the present.

I can truthfully say that my best days are associated with Oxford, its people, the pupils of my time, its social life.

I feel that we are indebted to Dr. Yount for making possible our reunions and strengthening the ties which make life worthwhile.

The Bulletin has received a clipping from the Washington, N. J. Star, of June 2nd, 1904, which reads:---

"Strange Death of Brothers

"Oxford friends have received notice of the sad deaths in South America of William and George Henry, sons of Eugene Henry, who was at one time manager of the Oxford Iron Co.

"The boys were employed at No Man's Land in South America. George died suddenly of heart disease, expiring a few minutes after being stricken.

William did not hear of his brothers death until the next day, being employed at another part of the island.

He at once started to the place of his brother's death. To reach there he and some companions had to cross a river. In doing this the boat capsized and all were drowned.

"A third brother, Joseph, was killed a month ago in a railroad accident in Hudson county. They are survived by another brother, a sister, and the mother."



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