

437

The
BULLETIN

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

A. G. YOUNT
Minister



Oxford Historical Record

O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever.

Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! --- Psalm 107: 1, 8.

When the Pilgrim Fathers in the May Flower anchored at Cape Cod, in 1620, after a nine week's stormy voyage, they used this Psalm in their worship. It was afterward called the "Psalm of the Pilgrim Fathers."

"We thank thee, O Lord for all thy mercies of every kind. We bless thee for the gift of life, for thy protection round about us, for thy guiding hand upon us, and for the many tokens of thy love within us. We thank thee for good hopes and precious memories, for friendship and duty, for the joys that cheer and the trials that teach us to trust in thee. In all these benefits, our heavenly Father make us wise to use them to thy glory and our own welfare and happiness. Amen."

Next Thursday is our national Thanksgiving Day. It is really the most distinctive of all holidays.

Partly because no other country has such a national celebration, and because it is so emphatically American. For Americans in all the other countries, where ever they may happen to be, will gather together to celebrate the Day.

This year it will be observed in America with special gratitude, in view of the fearful conditions prevailing in other lands. The supreme blessings recited in our national hymn "America", were never more true, nor more precious than at this time. Truly sang the Psalmist of old, "Happy is that people, that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

The Bulletin has just passed its 9th birthday. The first number was issued on November 16th, 1929.

During that period 435 weekly editions were published, only 33 less than the total of weeks, and of these 6 were due to illness of the Editor. The other 27 fell in the summer vacations, making an average of three annually.

As the Editor has made and published every edition by himself he will be pardoned in thinking that he has been blest with most favorable circumstances in many ways, such as good health, time and opportunity for the weekly task, and not least a genuine pleasure in doing the work.

But above all he has enjoyed the remarkable support of a large number of Oxford citizens, both the residents, and especially those who long ago made this place their happy home.

Their support has taken many helpful forms. The annual cost of the weekly production and postage is a little less than \$300. And the voluntary donations to this fund have always about equaled this sum, though never exceeding it, so that the Editor has no fear of being prosecuted for graft in office!

But above all else the success of the Bulletin has been due to the readers who have, in so many ways, contributed reading matter of interest. The variety of this material, perhaps has never been surpassed in a paper of such small compass and limited clientele.

It is gratifying to acknowledge all these, and many unnamed, mercies that have made possible the publication of the Bulletin during the nine years of its life.

It is a satisfaction to review the history of these years in the confidence that it has been of substantial service to the Church and the community at large in connection with annual Reunions, and the old furnace, and the general public welfare of the town that so many love and like to remember.

The Editor was at The Sussex county Court House last Tuesday looking for more official documents bearing upon the Furnace history. He was not disappointed, but much pleased to find some important papers, he had not examined on former occasions.

By the enthusiastic co-operation of Miss Mary Diveny, born and raised in Oxford, and for many years assistant in the Surrogate office, an official Survey of the Furnace lands made in the year 1812, was found.

This survey, we believe, is the only one in existence, as more recent surveys of the Iron Company have all been lost. For when in 1935 the present owning Company was preparing the deed for the furnace to transfer it to the State, they had to make use of a recent deed to the adjoining property of the M.E. Church. So the new-found old survey is of great value to the Warren Foundry & Pipe Corp. the present owning Company. The officers of which will surely be glad to know of the existence of this Survey.

The occasion for this survey was the following:--

In 1809 Morris Robeson, grandson of Jonathan Robeson purchased one half interest in the furnace lands from the heirs of Susan Shippen Blair, the daughter of Dr. Wm. Shippen, the Elder, who died in 1801, leaving the Oxford properties to his two surviving children, Susan and Dr. Wm. Jr.

But in 1809 the heir of Dr. Wm. Jr. were Minors. (Dr. Wm. Jr. died in 1808). So that Morris Robeson did not have controlling interest in the property, and he could not make use of it. So in 1811, he made an agreement with the heir, by name William, and his Guardian, to apply to the Sussex County Court for a division of the lands.

Proper legal steps were accordingly taken to bring about this very necessary end in order that both parties might proceed in their purposes in the control and management of their properties.

(over)

As Mr. Robeson and the minor heir and Guardian were all citizens of Philadelphia, it was planned there.

This application was officially made, and is preserved with the order of the court and the Survey.

The survey was completed in 1812, and by this action the furnace and all the connected buildings were allotted to Morris Robeson.

All this sheds light on a statement in the "Robeson Genealogy," that

"In 1809 Morris Robeson purchased the property at Oxford Furnace, and here the family of Morris now spent the summers, returning to Phila. for the winter season: but finally settled permanently at Oxford."

The facts above detailed explain in part at least the delay in making their home in Oxford, and certainly accounts for Robeson's not making improvements on the lands.

But the very next year after the survey of 1812, Mr. Robeson began in earnest to develop the property in a substantial manner.

On the site of the present M. E. church building there stood a saw-mill and an old but small grist mill. Robeson dismantled these and erected a large stone grist mill. This was in the year 1813, and in 1813 the Methodist congregation obtained the property and converted it into the present church edifice.

Mr. Robeson was an able business man and developed all his lands, making them profitable and more valuable.

We do not yet know when he bought the rest of the furnace lands from the young William Shippen. That doubtless can easily be found out. But as William reached his majority in 1813, he probably sold his possessions in Oxford soon afterwards.

This young William was the great grand son of Dr. Wm. Shippen, the Elder, and at this time the only surviving male heir. Yet there were three natural heirs on the distaff side living, but perhaps he inherited the Oxford lands by will of his grand father, Dr. Wm. Jr.



CHURCH OFFICERS

The Session

A. G. YOUNT, *Moderator*

Elders

ABRAM PITTENGER
EMMANUEL KELSKY

ELISHA B. FOSS
LEWIS BERGENBACK



Board of Trustees

JAMES RADEL
GEORGE DOCKER, JR.
FRED K. SARSON
BENJAMIN GREEN

HARRY MILLER
CHARLES RENNER
LEWIS E. GREEN
CHARLES DUX

HAYDEN DOCKER



Church Treasurer

LEWIS E. GREEN



Sunday School

<i>Superintendent</i>	E. B. FOSS
<i>Assistant Superintendent</i>	KENNETH BELL
<i>Secretary</i>	ALVIN RENNER
<i>Treasurer</i>	VIRGINIA ZAPP
<i>Organist</i>	FLORENCE WILDRICK



Ladies' Aid Society

<i>President</i>	MRS. DELMAR GREEN
<i>Vice-President</i>	MRS. LELAND BAYLISS
<i>Secretary</i>	MRS. VIOLET BELL
<i>Treasurer</i>	MRS. LEWIS E. GREEN

