

The  
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.*

When there is no vision, the people perish... Prov. 29:18

Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Acts. 17: 19.

" Most gracious God, the Fountain of all blessing; Thou hast opened thy hand to fill us with all good things: Thou keepest us beneath the shadow of thy wings in safety; Thou providest for us as a father; Thou lovest us as a friend, and art exceedingly merciful to all that fear thee, and for all things do we ascribe to Thee, O Lord, all praise and honor and glory. Amen.

---

The Union Thanksgiving meeting last Wednesday evening exceeded our expectations in both attendance and impressiveness. The printed program was carried out fully, and there were pleasing extras. All who were present expressed delight with the service, and there should be no difficulty in repeating it in coming years. Captain Clark Little, son of "Jep" Little, Oxford born and bred, and Lieutenant Strain of the Salvation Army from Bethlehem, Pa. came especially to attend this service. The Captain made a short and interesting talk, and the lieutenant played two hymns on the cornet in a thrilling manner, in tones pure and beautiful.

Captain Little brought his band of nearly twenty instruments to Oxford, last Tuesday evening for a concert in the School hall, and all were surprised and pleased with the excellent music they supplied.

---

We acknowledge receipt of one dollar each from Mrs. Ella Bumiller Kellogg; Miss Eva Bumiller, and Mrs. Jennie Radel Hardess. Many thanks.

---

We urge upon our readers to send in articles, letters and other material for the Bulletin.

## Joseph W. Shippen

During the long period of 35 years in which Dr. Wm. Shippen was the sole owner of the Furnace, he did not manage it himself, but at first leased it to Jacob Starn (as stated in the last installment of this history), and after the lease expired, or on the death of Starn, or before 1730, he then let his son Joseph operate the Furnace until his death in 1795. Joseph himself owned no part of it, though had he outlived his father he would have inherited it with all the land by his father's will. But unfortunately for his family, he died six years before his father. However he operated it for 20 years under the most favorable circumstances, as if he were the real owner. For apparently his father let him have all the profits from the Furnace in that period, for he became a man of wealth, as deeds we found in Newton and Trenton show that he purchased large tracts of land. For one tract he paid 6000 pounds. As he managed the Furnace during most if not all of the Revolutionary War, this is not surprising, for the profits must have been large. Then too, without doubt, he was well prepared to manage the business as he had much time to learn it, for he began to live in the Mansion house before 1770, so that he had more than ten years to make himself familiar with all the details of the business.

Histories of the Furnace, with one exception, furnish no information about the life of Joseph, but we have discovered a number of details which shed some light upon his life and character. Joseph W. Shippen, son of Dr. Wm. Shippen, the Elder, was born in Phila. Oct. 17. 1737. The first reference to him is found in a letter of his father to the latter's brother Edward, of Lancaster, Pa. Mch. 8. 1756, in which he says, "I thank you for your kindness to my son Jo. He has finished his Ledger to pretty good purpose, and has gone over Euclid again, and I think can raise a proportion to secundum artem." Joseph was then 19 years old, and evidently in his uncle's school in Lancaster. The letter

indicates that he was being prepared for a commercial life. We do not know whether or not he attended Princeton College, where his brother William had been educated. As his father was a trustee and wealthy, it is strange if he did not go there.

The next information is drawn from the letters of Joseph now in the Historical Society in Phila. These mostly deal with his business there in the 1760s, which was that of an importer of fine wines. He probably had a store there. The earliest proof of his residence in Oxford is a letter written from Oxford, when he was ill in bed, to the County Clerk at Newton in behalf of one of his negro slaves imprisoned there for a theft, for which the penalty was death. This was in the year 1770.

On February 18, 1775 Joseph was appointed Justice of Peace in Sussex County, by the Governor and Council which met at Perth Amboy. This is evidence of his rising importance in the county. And during the Revolutionary War he served as paymaster in the Hospital of Washington's army in Bethlehem, Pa. In 1777 we find references to him in the letters of his sister-in-law, his brother William's wife, and in the Journal of their daughter Nancy. Nancy was then in a Girl's school in Trenton, and her mother wrote, saying, "I have looked all over this place (Reading, P. where she stayed part of the time while avoiding Phila, during the presence of the British Army) but no muslin, satin or dimity can be got. However your Uncle Joe says he has a whole suit of dimity very fine and that you may have what you want. Get enough for two bags, one for me, and the other for yourself." In another letter her mother promises that her Uncle Joe Shippen will come for her "in our Phaeton" to bring her from New York. This was in 1781. And in 1784 Nancy Notes in her Journal, -- "I went... to bid my Uncle Shippen farewell before he went home; he has been upon a visit to Papa for this last three weeks."

It is plain that Joseph was held in deep affection by his family in Phila and this fact with the letter soliciting mercy for his slave in peril of death, shows plainly that he (over)

that he was a person of friendly disposition. It is possible too, and as often happens in such cases, that he was easy going and apt to yield to those of stronger will and determination, such as his brother William who had great influence over him. We were impressed with this fact in studying Joseph's letters of which the very handwriting showed this trait.

This characteristic should be kept in mind in judging his conduct in the matter that most deeply interests us,--his marriage to Martha Axford. It is well known that the union was not legitimated, and that this was due to the pressure of Joseph's family in Philadelphia.

This wealthy and aristocratic family was dominated by the ideas of the English high caste system, which we can hardly understand, and does not exist in this country today. But apart from this most regrettable omission, the union of Joseph and Martha was in every other way praiseworthy and fitting.

Both belonged to excellent families, it is quite natural that the children of such a union should be of a superior type. There were seven of these who married into the most prominent families in this region--Blair, McMurtrie, McTier, Crisman, Taylor, etc., all leading pioneer families.

There is a romantic side to this marriage. Joseph grew up in and moved among the high social people of Phila., and had ample opportunity to marry in that company, but instead he comes out to this wilderness and loses his heart to a plain country girl and lives with her devotedly until death. The fact is creditable to both parties, to Joseph that he followed his own true love, and to Martha that she had such superior attraction for him. Here is a fine background for a great novel or drama, and in time, no doubt, it will be so taken and developed.

Historical judgment must take into account all the factors of the time and circumstances; and this rule we have tried to follow in this record.



**CHURCH OFFICERS**

*The Session*

A. G. YOUNT, *Moderator*

*Elders*

ABRAM PITTENGER

ELISHA B. FOSS

EDWARD T. GREEN

LEWIS BERGENBACK



*Board of Trustees*

JAMES RADEL

HARRY MILLER

GEORGE DOCKER, JR.

CHARLES RENNER

FRED K. SARSON

LEWIS E. GREEN

EDWARD SHARPS

CHARLES DUX

BENJAMIN GREEN



*Church Treasurer*

LEWIS E. GREEN



*Sunday School*

*Superintendent* ..... E. B. FOSS

*Assistant Superintendent* ..... CHRIS SEIPLE

*Secretary* ..... ALVIN RENNER

*Treasurer* ..... MERRILL FOSS

*Organist* ..... MISS RUTH SNYDER

*Assistant Organist* ..... MISS ALICE BELL



*Choir*

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

