

451

OXFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

The
BULLETIN

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

A. G. YOUNT

Minister



Oxford Historical Record

Mr. Philip W. Henry writes:-

"Among those from Oxford who attended the Centennial in 1876 were my brother Will and myself, and we stayed in Philadelphia several days with relatives. We were there on the 4th of July, which was one of the hottest days within my memory.

I was particularly interested in visiting the exhibit of the State of New Jersey where I found a map of New Jersey which I had made and which was exhibited by the Oxford Public School as one of its Exhibits.

I was also interested in Edwin Perkins' account of the various horses in Oxford when we were young; but our horse, which was well described, had the name of Frank instead of the one given by Ed.

(Mr. Henry's reference to the maps will recall to the reader the article in last issue by Mrs. Henry Zulauf, and makes an interesting sequel to it.)

Mr. Humphrey is using his influence in the interest of the Old Furnace by writing impressive letters to the members of the Appropriations Committee of the State Assembly, urging them to make an appropriation at this session.

He sends us sample copies of the letters he is writing, and we are sure they will be read with interest by them.

It would help greatly if other friends of this historic relic should also send personal appeals to the committee or to the members of the Legislature from their County.

"A meeting of the Hillside Cemetery Association will be held on Sunday Feb. 26th, at 2 o'clock in the Colonial M. E. Church. The presence of all trustees and officers is urgently requested."

Mrs. Bessie Henderson, Sec.

Bulletin No. 451. Feb. 26, 1939

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

-----Galatians 5:22-23

"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. Thou hast been wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and all our sins are laid upon Thee.

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

Help us in patience to carry forward the eternal cross of Christ counting it joy if we, too, are sown as grains of wheat in the furrows of the world, for only by the agony of the righteous comes the redemption of the world."

The Pastor will conduct religious services at the Presbyterian Home for Old Folks, in Belvidere, this afternoon at 3 o'clock.

The regular monthly meeting of the Ladies Aid Society will be held on March 7th. It will be preceded by a covered dish luncheon in the Chapel.

The Ladies are planning for the Cafeteria Supper in the Chapel on March 17th.

Sarah Ann, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George R. Wirth was presented for Christian Baptism at the morning Service last Sabbath.

The babe of two months is the grandchild of the Pastor, and the parents reside in Plainfield, N. J.

Old Oxford Days
By Clinton E. Weston

SYKES GAP
By George S. Humphrey

Mrs. Naomi Poole, a former resident of Oxford, answered the final summons on January 30th, last, at the Masonic Home, Burlington, N.J. and entered into eternal rest in the wonderful and mysterious beyond.

Coming to Oxford as Miss McFall in the early '70s to teach in the public school, she at once made a most favorable impression in the community by the charm of her personality and by engaging in the activities of the place, both social and religious, with a natural grace that soon won her a host of lasting friendships.

Soon after arriving in Oxford she became a member of the Second Church.

The writer, although at a tender age at the time, has vivid recollections of her wealth of black curls--the vogue of the time--and in one particular instance of the spelling-bee that was held in the M. E. Church and that created such widespread interest, and the fact that Miss McFall carried off one of the prizes.

Miss McFall was born July 6, 1855, at Bethel, Penna., and completed her studies in the local school; being so apt and proficient that she was granted a teacher's certificate to teach and in succession taught at Martin's Creek, Harmony and lastly at Oxford.

On October 26, 1876, Miss McFall was married in the Second Church by Mr. Cline to William B. Poole, who came to Oxford shortly after the Civil War. A large, fine looking man, and they made a decidedly handsome couple.

In 1884, Mr. and Mrs. Poole with their family, moved to Scranton and were members of the first Presbyterian Church there until Mr. Poole's death in 1927.

Throughout the years Mrs. Poole's interest and love of Oxford never waned, and those who visited her in the past few years, spoke of her enthusiasm as she recalled the dear old days among the people she held in affectionate regard.

In the passing of another of that coterie of friends of old to blend with the tides of eternity, we pay our respects to a loving mother and

I suppose that everybody in Oxford knows where Sykes Gap is, and that it is a rugged pass between high hills, which opens out of Van Ness Gap almost directly over the eastern portal of the railroad tunnel and extending northerly to Axford avenue near Cat Swamp. I fear that since the woods were cut off a few years ago it has lost its former wildness, but when I knew it there was a dense growth of forest, mostly oak and chestnut, with an occasional big sycamore or other great tree which gave the Gap a quality of remoteness that was fascinating to me.

While an occasional walk through the Gap on a bright Sunday afternoon was considered a pleasant little outing, I think that my old friend "Jim" Loder and myself were the only persons who appreciated its charm at night or its wild beauty in early morning. Soon after my coming to Oxford, more than sixty years ago, we explored the locality pretty thoroughly and among the other interesting things discovered what was evidently the remains of a charcoal burner's hut, occupied many years ago when charcoal was used as fuel at the old blast furnace. Near by was one of the "pits" which I suppose are still found in the woods throughout that entire region, and are easily distinguished as trees have never grown on them, and because they are covered with a thick carpet of grass. The hut had been constructed on the hillside, a short distance above the floor of the gap through which a brook, generally concealed among the loose rocks, flows with a soft gurgling sound. In front of the ruin of the charcoal burner's hut some of the stones had been removed so that the clear spring water was available.

At first Jim and I spent many afternoons on the site, rebuilding the walls over which we place a shelter of boughs and constructing a fireplace in front of the "door;" also clearing the path to the spring. But later we began the practice of spending a Saturday night there, returning to (over) a devout Christian.

civilization in time for Church Sunday morning--a very necessary thing in those days! I was employed in the "Office" and had my evening free while Jim, being in the "Store" could not leave till later. So it devolved on me to go out with the provisions before dark, get the fire started and the viands ready for cooking as soon as Jim should arrive.

For illumination we had a number of miner's lamps hung on trees, and for beacons we used several soft porous bricks which we soaked in Kerosene and suspended with wire.

When these were lighted they made a glare which could be seen for a long distance through the woods, and served as a guide for Jim on his somewhat "Spooky" walk to the camp.

Also each carried a revolver, and when Jim reached the entrance to the Gap he would fire a shot to which I responded. We kept this up at frequent intervals until he reached the hut.

Near the camp we had discovered a sort of cave under a big rock where we sequestered all our utensils--frying pan, gridiron, kettle, coffee pot, cups, tin plates, etc.--so that we were not obliged to lug them back and forth every time we camped. While we occasionally heard the sharp bark of a fox or the hoot of an owl, the only wild animals which disturbed us were diminutive field mice which were attracted by the odor of our provisions and seemed to like the warmth of our camp. -- frequently amusing themselves by running across our faces and awakening us out of a sound and peaceful sleep.

After enduring their attentions for some time we circumvented them by tying everything edible in packages and suspending them by strings from near by trees. This plan preserved our food, and we soon became accustomed to, and rather enjoyed, their journeys over our faces, or their nestling under our shirts. They were very companionable.

The early mornings were especially beautiful. The sun rising above the eastern hill and gradually penetrating into the shadowy depths of the narrow gap, accompanied by the singing of birds-- not only robins and other familiar songsters, but the

more unusual and sweet tones of the wood-thrush and the soft, cooing of mourning doves--all which created a feeling of peace and a sense of loveliness which only those who have had similar experiences can appreciate. We always felt that it was by no means an unprofitable beginning for the Sabbath--a view with which, I am sorry to say, some of our elders did not agree.

At first we picked out warm and pleasant summer evenings for excursions to the Gap, but as we became more and more to enjoy the night there, we would sometimes start out together in a rain or even snow storm, late in the evening, carrying lanterns as a light to our way.

We always kept a supply of dry wood in the shelter of our camp so that soon after our arrival we would have a crackling fire.

Then resting comfortably in our hut and listening to the pattering of the rain on the boughs which covered it and on the trees about us, we felt that there was a charm in it all which, while different from that of a mild summer night, was equally entrancing.

Most of our fellow boarders at the "Fowler House" considered us rather "looney" when we began our night trips to the Gap. But when we went out there on stormy nights they wondered if we were not soon to become tenants of the State Asylum. However we continued on the even tenor of our way, thinking that our style of enjoyment was at least as rational as spending an evening in playing cards or in gossiping. Nevertheless, we continued to be regarded as "a little queer."

And I guess we were rather unusual.

We always felt that the Gap must have been a favorite resort for Indians in ancient times, and we kept up a constant search for evidence of their occupations, especially after hearing the legend of Linstrom, the charcoal burner and the burial place of the Delawares. But we did see some strange and interesting sights there, about which I may write more fully some time.



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>	FRANCES PITTENGER



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



Young People's Society

<i>President</i>	WILBUR JOHNSON
<i>Secretary</i>	JOSEPHINE MEYERS
<i>Treasurer</i>	MRS. ELLA RITZER
<i>Organist</i>	FLORENCE WILDRICK

