



456
(Written about 1878)

The
BULLETIN

**SECOND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

A. G. YOUNT

Minister



Oxford Historical Record



Sykes Gap
By James E. Loder
(Written about 1878)

I was born along the banks of the beautiful Delaware, and from my youth up had a great love for rambling along the banks of this lovely stream. And in this way became familiar with the country for forty miles around.

I removed to Oxford when I was about seventeen and it being as it were a new country afforded a new land for explorations. The village of Oxford was a small iron town of two thousand inhabitants; though it was scattered so much that a stranger passing through the place would suppose that there were but a few hundred. The important part of the town was a large Store which was the center of attraction from all quarters for business purposes as well as for gossip.

I was employed at the time in the capacity of clerk. As there was nothing especially exciting about the town we boys often had to break the monotony of life.

About this time there came to Oxford a young man (whom we will call George, my own name being Jim) whose love for pedestrian excursions, and in fact, every thing beautiful in nature rivaled or excelled my own.

He had seen more of the world than I, having spent one summer in the Adirondacks and also had traveled in other directions.

And as travel broadens the mind his claim upon the surrounding areas accessible to pedestrians, was unlimited. Heretofore I had been satisfied with a comparatively small scope of the country, my walks being limited to two or three miles, and to walk five miles was something to talk about with pride.

Being easily influenced, I was soon convinced that five miles was but a small walk, which any girl could accomplish, and if I wished to build up a reputation as a walker I must go four times that distance, or twenty miles.

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A new heart will I give you and
a new spirit will I put within you;
and I will take away the stony
heart out of your flesh.

And I will put my Spirit within
you, and cause you to walk in my
statutes, and ye shall keep my
judgments, and do them.

--- Ezekiel 36:26,27

"Almighty God in whom is perfect peace. Draw us, we pray Thee, into the secret of Thy presence that we may find that peace which quiets every doubt and fills the the heart with joy and confidence. Save us from the shame and emptiness of a fretful and hurried life.

Grant us patience that amid the storms of life we may hear a deeper voice assuring us that all is well, because Thou art with us, our Redeemer and Lord. Amen.

Next Sabbath will be Easter and we shall have unusual services, with the observance of the Lord's Supper. The Choir will render several beautiful anthems on which much time has been spent, and will be sung with gladness befitting the theme and occasion.

The 9th annual Reunion will be on May 21st, and plans to make it another great event are well on the way.

For the morning hour of worship we have been trying to persuade the Rev. Howard D. Perkins, Dean of the Cathedral Church of Saint Luke, Portland, Maine, to come and preach for us. We hope in the next issue to make a definite announcement. We know that many of his old friends are urging him to come. But it is a long distance for him to come and leave the busy life of a great church; and if he decides to arrange for such an absence it will be highly appreciated, and considered a great favor to his old Oxford friends.

Notes by Abram Pittenger

(from front cover)

(Mrs Jane Pittenger Haufler writes, As you know my father has been staying with me in the winter. The days the Bulletin and the Washington Star came were the red letter days of the week. It is splendid that you are able in this way to bring happiness to so many people. Before father left he wrote the following and asked me to send it to you.)

"For some time I have been reading the Bulletin about things that happened in Oxford. I can look back a good many years as I will be eighty seven on March 31st.

Mr. Weber spoke about the Centennial in 1876. This was before my marriage and my wife went with her brother, Wm. S. Cooke. I went with Arthur Allen a brother of Mrs. Belle Stinson.

It was nothing like the Fair in Chicago in 1935. My son Will and I went there from Joliet three or four times. If you got in a crowd there, there was no turning back.

Mrs. Zulauf wondered how many remembered Mr. Terwilliger. I well remember him, having been in sled load rideing parties with him. I met him later at the Newton street School in Newark, where he was Principal.

I can't recall about all the mules and horses I have seen in my time.

After the Nail factory, where I was employed, shut down Mr George Searing permitted me to take a team of mules and a wood wagon to get a load of wood. I had been there before, this time Charley Baumgartner went with me. We had a big load and on coming down the mountain the front wheel struck a big stone which caused the wagon tongue to swing against one of the mules, knocking it over on its side and under the other mules.

The mule lay there as if dead, with his eyes closed.

Charlie got excited and said, 'Mein Gott'. But as I had seen this happen before I said, 'He is not dead but sleepeth.'

(Mrs Haufler adds, "Mr. Yount, I tell father I question if the quotations of the last episode are suitable for the Bulletin, but thought you might enjoy reading it.)

We did, and so will others!

As the accomplishment of any feat makes it seem less in our own eyes-- even twenty miles after a time became as an ordinary walk; and our ambition led us to attempt even forty miles, which was finally done.

But what I wish to speak of here is our expedition to Sykes Gap which was a particularly favorite place of ours, being about three miles from the village. The place itself was certainly very beautiful being an opening between two mountains and about two miles in extent.

You could enter at one end and come out at the other, making a very pleasant walk for any one who enjoys nature unbroken by any scene that would indicate the presence of man. Especially in the Fall was it was even prettier when the leaves were turned into various shades which nature's artist knows well how to arrange to make most pleasing to the eye. Being rather a solitary place to any one who is in the least superstitious, it was much more pleasant to have a companion. There was a strange legend connected with this place which was written up by a friend of mine (this same George) and published in the semi-weekly N.Y. Tribune, which made it even more attractive to us.

Now I believe that every one has a tinge of superstition which, lying dormant can be engendered in them under conditions favorable to give them life. If you can't do this the story I am about to tell will lose half its interest.

As our duties would not permit us to go away very often in the day, we were often obliged to go in the uncanny hours of the night, and at last we came to prefer mid-night as the most desirable time to be there.

We usually started about 10:30 PM so as to be comfortably settled and all fixed around the large fire which we would build.

In our rambling through the Gap we accidentally stumbled upon a small space at the foot of the hill, partially enclosed by a wall extending around three sides, leaving the fourth side open to a place very favorable to build a fire. (over

enclosed walls reflecting back the heat, and with a little alteration and addition, - especially on the two sides so as to break the force of the wind sweeping up and down through the Gap, - made an exceedingly comfortable place. And in fact became in time, as we went there so often it seemed like home to us, and we would remark to each other that no matter how hard the wind blew or how hard the rain fell (for a rainy night was a particularly choice night to us) we always seemed to be amply sheltered and extremely comfortable, although we had no shelter over us except what the trees afforded. We had to laugh at ourselves remarking to each other that it rained pretty hard out doors and dreading to start back home in such a rain, when it would be dripping down in full force from the limbs and twigs above us.

If any of you have ever been out in the woods on a moon-light night you will know that every thing presents a different appearance from its usual aspect. I shall never forget what a time we had to find the place the first night we were out; how we stumbled around among the rocks, how George tore his pants and came near breaking his shin by stumbling on the sharp edge of a rock. He was the most unfortunate fellow in this respect I ever met and would always meet with accident, either a tear, or mud, or wet feet, or something of the kind; probably because he always led the way and I therefore escaped the dangers he fell into. I had a poor memory in the first place, and was always losing my way, while he was an exceptionally good guide, and would always know a place if he had been over the ground before.

To write a complete reminiscence of all the incidents connected with our excursions would fill a good sized volume, so I will confine myself to one night in particular, which stands out prominently in my mind above the others as being connected with the supernatural.

(to be concluded next issue)

Hillside Cemetery

By Clinton E. Weston, Chairman.

The Hillside Cemetery Association has held its three regular monthly meetings throughout the winter months

At these meetings the reports of the various committees, composed of Cemetery, Finance and Entertainment, are taken up and discussed in order to arrive at matured plans to follow when the weather permits commencing work in the Cemetery.

These committees to a certain extent work independently, which indicates that whatever is decided upon is done with some order and system.

The Association has in the short time since its organization issued six perpetual care certificates, and inquiries have been received in regard to several more, which is most gratifying and encouraging to the Officers and the Trustees so that they realize that their efforts have the confidence and the support of all who are interested in having this fine Cemetery second to none.

The Cemetery Committee is now sending out return-post-cards to those whose addresses are available for the purpose of securing more seasonal care subscribers; the cost of this care being three dollars a year. But the Committee wishes it understood that it has no thought of interfering in any way those who have other plans for the care of their plots. The main idea being to encourage the care and maintenance of as many plots as can be obtained.

The beautiful decorations at Christmas time have been commented upon, and now, with the approach of Decoration Day, the anticipation is that the Cemetery, which has come to mean so much to many, will look more beautiful than ever.



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Elders

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