

475

The
BULLETIN

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

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Minister



Oxford Historical Record

Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. For I the Lord will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not, I will help thee.
---Isaiah 41:10,13

"Hear our prayers, O Lord, and consider our desires. Give unto us true humility, a meek and quiet spirit, a loving, friendly, holy and useful manner of life; bearing the burdens of our neighbors, denying ourselves, and studying to benefit others, and to please Thee in all things. Grant us to be faithful in performing promises, loving our relatives, careful of our charges; to be gentle and easy to be entreated, slow to anger, and readily prepared for every good work. Amen."

The next issue of the Bulletin will in two weeks--August 27th.

The World's Fair Bus party is completed and all seats taken.

The Bus will leave Oxford on Tuesday morning, Aug. 15th, at seven (7) o'clock. There will be 33 in the party.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed. F. Stout, of Cleveland Ohio, spent a week visiting in Oxford, returning home last Monday. They were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Hatton, Oxford is still their old home town, and dear to them.

Mrs. Henry Zulauf sends her subscription for the Bulletin, and in a note adds: "I think the older we grow the more we love Oxford, and all connected with it in every way."

Receipts for the Bulletin during the past six weeks are as follows*
Miss Grace Scranton \$2.00; Miss Mary Diveney \$2.00; Mrs Henry Zulauf \$2.00; George Docker Sr. \$1;50; Mrs. Emma Meyers and Mrs Elmer Lacey \$1.00 each.

Four of these are new subscribers which is very gratifying.

Documents for a History
of the old Oxford Furnace
By A.G.Yount
(concluded from No.473)

The numerous documents thus far described relate to the history of the Furnace from the beginning up to the death of Dr.Wm.Shippen,Sr. in 1801. And until recently we supposed our search had been completed,

For we assumed that the statements in various histories about the ownership of the furnace from that time onward were correct. But the discovery of many more documents since then has compelled a revision of the existing accounts,as will appear in the following description of these documents.

On the death of Dr.Wm.Shippen,Sr. the furnace properties descended by his Will to his two surviving children, Dr.Wm.Shippen Jr.and Susan the wife of Rev, Samuel Blair.

The latter had two children,Wm.S. Blair and Susan,who married Isaac Roberdeau.

An Indenture of 1802 in the Sussex County records shows that Wm.S.Blair sold his rights of inheritance in the estate to his sister Susan and her husband,and at the same time the parents,Rev.Samuel Blair and wife authorized Roberdeau and wife to administer the estate and manage the properties. This arrangement was made in order to carry out the directions of the Will of Dr.Wm. the Elder respecting the children of his son Joseph W.Shippen,who died in 1795, which was completed in 1807 by setting apart farms and providing for annuities. The deed shows that Isaac Roberdeau and wife were residents of Oxford,in the Manor House, from 1802 onward. The statement that Nicholas Biddle was once a part owner in the furnace has no warrant in official documents,though he may have, with Roberdeau, leased and operated the furnace.

In 1809 Morris Robeson,grandson of Jonathan Robeson, purchased the one half interest in the furnace properties owned by Isaac Roberdeau and wife.(Warren County Records Book T,page 205). The consideration was \$10,000. Morris Robeson never owned the other half of the estate, as will appear presently.

In 1808 Dr.Wm.Shippen,Jr.died leaving his half of the furnace properties to his grandson,Wm.Shippen,son of Thomas,who died in 1799.

The situation then was that both Morris Robeson and Wm.Shippen had a one half interest in the estate, but as it was undivided,neither alone could control it. It is a curious circumstance in that it repeated the condition that obtained in 1745 when Joseph Shippen and Jonathan Robeson each owned one half of the undivided furnace tract. Thus there was evidently a rivalry between the two families over the ownership of the furnace;whether friendly or otherwise we have no authority to decide.

However,Morris Robeson and Wm. Shippen aforesaid, in a friendly suit to the Probate court of Sussex in the year 1812, asked for an official division of the properties.

This was carried out by the court with new surveys,and divisions made in 1813. Robeson got the furnace tract in his share,and proceeded to develop the property,except the furnace which for some unknown reason he never operated.

Morris Robeson died in 1823, leaving his widow Tacey Executrix of the estate.

Since beginning these articles we have found an Indenture of much interest for our history. (Warren County Records, Book, No.9. p.509).

In this deed Judge Wm.P.Robeson, son of Morris, and his brother-in-law, John P.B.Maxwell purchased from Wm.Shippen, of Farley, Bucks County, Pa., all his Oxford lands, 2660 acres. The consideration was \$10,000. Again it is curious to note that it is the same sum as that paid by Morris Robeson in 1809 for the one half interest of the heirs of Susan Blair. Now for the first time all the furnace lands belonged to the Robeson family, but it was not to remain so very long as great changes were even then in process of formation. For the furnace had been leased to William Henry and Co.,and this was the beginning of a new and greater era in the history of the furnace.

But after the purchase of the Oxford lands from Wm.Shippen,in 1832 by Robeson and Maxwell, (over)

the ownership was still divided, but this situation was cleared up in 1834, when Wm. P. Robeson and J. P. B. Maxwell bought out all the properties of the Morris Robeson estate. This important Indenture (Warren County Records Book No. 12, page 523. ff.) transferred over 3000 acres, making a total of over 6,000 acres. The consideration was \$46,000., thus giving Robeson and Maxwell the entire old furnace lands once owned by Dr. Wm. Shippen, the Elder.

This Indenture of 1834 supplies us with a bit of information that we have long sought for in vain.

In the description of the furnace tract is found this statement:-

"Lot No. 4. (148.35 acres) being part of a tract of land located by Colonel Daniel Coxe, commonly called the Furnace Tract."

This confirms our surmise that this tract originally belonged to Col. Daniel Coxe, and as he died in 1739, two years before the death of Joseph Sr. aforesaid, the latter must have bought it by some kind of an agreement with Col. Coxe.

We have now only to find the date when it was located to Col. Coxe, in order to complete the entire history from the beginning.

Our purpose in these papers will be accomplished by a reference to the "Scranton Papers" in our possession which cover the business actions of the Scrantons in the first years of their operations in Oxford and especially in starting their iron works in Scranton Pa. which they founded and which was named after them.

These papers consist of cancelled notes, nearly a hundred of them, and mostly executed in Oxford; bills, accounts, ledgers, business letters; in all over 500 papers, completely covering that vital period of Oxford and Scranton, Pa.

The history of the old furnace from that time to 1884 is fully available, so that it need not be included in this survey.

The many friends of the old Furnace will be gratified with these numerous official documents which so definitely trace the entire history of this old monument of industrial service from early colonial times.



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