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The
BULLETIN

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

A. G. YOUNT
Minister



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There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

The liberal soul shall be made fat and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

---Proverbs 11:24, 25

"O Thou who art the hope of all the ends of the earth; Pity our race, and save the world from sin.

Protect our land from whatever threatens her welfare; and grant that religion and virtue may flourish more and more. Bless the people in their callings and families, and make every home a nursery of noble youth. Cleanse and sanctify the Church which Thou hast loved; and reveal the Spirit of thy Son, our Lord, through the life and service of thy people. Awaken the careless, comfort the afflicted and encourage those ready to faint.

Encompass with thy favor all who are dear to us, and keep us ever faithful to holy laws through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Our Fall Communion will be observed on October 8th, three weeks from today.

On the same Sabbath, Oct. 8th, the Sunday School will hold the annual Rally Day service at the regular school hour, 9:30 A.M.

Special features will be arranged for that occasion.

"A meeting of the Hillside Cemetery Association will be held on Sunday, Sept. 17th, at the cottage of Mrs. Dawe at Mt. Lake. A luncheon will be served there at one o'clock to be followed by the meeting of the officers and Trustees."

Mrs. Bessie Henderson
Sec.

The fall meeting of the Newton Presbytery will take place at the Yellow Frame Church, on Sept. 19th, at 10:00 A.M.

Daniel Thomas, a one time Oxford citizen and well known by old timers, died in the D.L. & W.R.R. hospital in Scranton, Pa. last Wednesday, September 13th. His home for many years was at East Orange, N.J.

He was in his 75th year of age, being born May 5th, 1865, in Wales.

He was not yet three years old at the time his parents with their children came to America, in June 1868, and settled in Oxford where his uncles, Thomas Thomas and Jabez had been for many years, working for the Iron Company.

He was first employed in the Company store as a clerk, and later went to Hoboken, as manager of the Pullman Company at that point. In time he was sent to Boston by the same Company, but not liking that situation, resigned and went to N.Y. City, and was engaged in the Express business. Later he was employed by the D.L. & W. in the freight offices in Hoboken, where he remained over 20 years until his death.

He married Mary Adams, the daughter of the keeper of a general store at Brass Castle. Their only child is Mrs. Ada Dunton, of East Orange. Two sisters and two brothers survive him. Mrs. Mary Price, of Newark; Mrs. Sarah Marlatt, of Summit; James Thomas, of Trenton; and Thomas Thomas, of Virginia. Their father was John T.

Mr. Thomas often attended the Reunions, and was here last May. A few weeks ago he was in Oxford with Clinton Weston, and called at the Manse. He was then in good health and happy to be in Oxford again.

He was a most genial man, and had many friends where ever he was known, and will be greatly missed.

He was received into our Church here in 1888, under the pastorate of Mr. Maxwell. The funeral was from the Funeral home of DeVoe, in Wash. N J on Saturday, Sept. 16th, at 2:30 P.M. with interment in Washington Cemetery.

The Thomas family has interesting connections with Oxford. The uncle of Daniel, Thomas Thomas, came to this country in 1842, after having been employed in the Iron works in England and France, and his first work here was at Passaic, and in 1843 he came to Oxford, and all his life was spent here and in Scranton. (Bulletin 292)

Margaret (Peggy) Shippen

In our last historical paper we dealt with the tradition of the Catalan Forge, which related to the old Furnace. In this we shall discuss the tradition, a very persistent one, that Peggy Shippen, the second wife of Benedict Arnold, was a frequent visitor in the old Mansion House.

We first heard the tradition when we came to Oxford many years ago, and have been often asked about it by visitors and local residents of Oxford.

The origin of the tradition is due doubtless to the fact that the furnace property was owned by the Shippen family of Philadelphia, and the general assumption is that she was the daughter of Dr. William Shippen, the Elder, who owned the property during the Revolutionary period.

This assumption is baseless, because Peggy was the great niece of the Doctor. She was the daughter of Edward Shippen, who was the son of Edward Shippen of Lancaster, Pa. The latter was the oldest brother of Dr. William.

Now Peggy was born in 1760, and it is unlikely that she was in Oxford during her early girlhood.

And when the Revolutionary War began she was not yet sixteen. And it is quite improbable that she came here during the War, for her father was a moderate loyalist, or Tory, while the family of Dr. William was intensely patriotic. During the period of the British occupancy of Phila. all the members of this family left the city, and did not return until the American army again had charge of it. While during that period the family of Peggy stayed in Phila. and their home was the social center of the British officers.

So that we can be certain she did not come to Oxford in that period. In less than a year after the British left the city she became the second wife of Benedict Arnold, and about a year later, he turned traitor and fled to the British army, and Peggy soon joined him.

Now the only time that she might have been in Oxford was in the early 1770s. But this is rendered unlikely because the Mansion House was then (over)

occupied by Joseph Shippen, the son of Dr. William, the Elder, who had married Martha Axford, the daughter of John Axford, the first settler in Oxford. The aristocratic Shippens of Phila. regarded this as a misalliance and bitterly opposed it, and there is no evidence that any members of Joseph's own family ever visited in his house except his father William.

It certainly excludes the notion that his young second cousin should have visited him.

Apart from these considerations we have to remember the conditions of travel at that time. Oxford was 70 odd miles from Philadelphia, and the roads were paths through the dense forests, which could only be made on horse-back, and required two days travel. And then there was nothing here but the furnace, and all around a sparsely settled wilderness.

Peggy's visits in Oxford are wholly without any contemporary evidence. We have examined the Shippen papers in Phila. at the Historical Society rooms, and these contain many hundreds of letters by all the members of the Shippen family at that time.

There was no mention of Oxford anywhere except in the letters of Dr. William, the Elder, and these referred to his own visits here.

Again there has recently come to light the Journal of Nancy Shippen, the grand-daughter of Dr. William covering the period when Peggy might have come here, and there is in that Journal only one or two notices of Peggy Shippen, in social gatherings, and no indication at all of Nancy's visits to Oxford, which she almost certainly never made.

No true historian can accept any tradition that is utterly without some evidence, or without some circumstantial reasons for considering it probable. And this tradition has neither facts of any kind, nor favorable reasons to sustain it.

It is unnecessary to say that the Editor has come to this conclusion with great regret, as it would add much to the historical glamor of the old Mansion House and Oxford, Peggy Shippen is a very famous person in American history.



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A. G. YOUNT, *Moderator*

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