

HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF
OLD RADNOR CHURCH.

1685-1875.

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PREFACE.

The design of this Historical sketch is to preserve (however crudely) the existing traditions and historic facts connected with this venerable church. Had the work been undertaken twenty years ago, it is needless to say how much more complete would have been its execution, but under the disadvantages ^{with} which ignorance and carelessness have baffled the most thorough investigations of the writer, his record of facts is probably as complete as can be made. While regret is warrantably felt at the many defects of this historic sketch, the reader must also acknowledge that the very fact of inability to account for many undoubted occurrences clothes, them with the interest peculiar to mystery, and of itself forcibly attests the antiquity of the church by showing how completely it has outlived many of the traditions of its members. With this statement of reasons for intruding my history into public notice, and with apologies for its imperfections, I acknowledge myself,

THE AUTHOR.

HISTORY.

St. David's (commonly called Radnor) Episcopal church, situated about a mile and a half southwest of Radnor Station, P. R. R., at the junction of Newtown township, Delaware County, and Easton township, Chester County, was established by a colony of Welshmen who emigrated from Radnorshire, Wales, about the year, A. D. 1685. Concerning the early history of this venerable institution, very little is definitely known. Tradition speaks decidedly of a log church near the site of the present edifice, where as early as the seventeenth century the settlers garrisoned themselves against the Indians. It is further said that this log church was finally burnt. A more accurate authority, however, from letters published in Dr. William S. Perry's recent work entitled, "Historical Collections of American Colonial Churches," shows us that service was first held from the year A. D. 1700 to 1704 by the Rev. Evan Evans (missionary at Christ's Church, Philadelphia,) at the house of a Mr. William Davis, and this fact of services held here prior to the erection of the present edifice is somewhat corroborated by the fact that in the old church register are recorded births of children in the year 1706. Oldmixon also, who wrote in 1708, mentions a "Congregation of Church-of-England men" at Radnor; while the ruins of an old log house on the property of Tryon Lewis, (formerly owned by William Davis,) seeming to mark the exact spot where the old church was established tends somewhat to reconcile tradition with history.

The Rev. Evan Evans (our first missionary minister) in a letter to the Honorable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, dated September, 1707, states that he preached in Welsh at Radnor once a fortnight for 4 years, and that among his numerous charges, Montgomery and Radnor next to Philad'a received his most special attention. He also refers to a letter sent to the Honorable Society by the people of Radnor, entreating for a minister who might be settled amongst them. This request was not granted for nearly seven years, and during the meantime the history of the old church is very obscure. From passages in Dr. Perry's Historical Collections, however, we learn that after the year 1705 (or about that date) Mr. John Clubb (who had previously been a schoolmaster in Philadelphia) without taking a special charge at Radnor, preached here quite often for several years, and finally in 1712, with many other prominent missionaries, he repeated the petition already referred to, offering himself at the same time as a missionary to Oxford and Radnor. This generous offer was accepted by the Honorable Society, and in the Summer of 1714 Mr. John Clubb was formally appointed as their missionary to these places.

In a letter to the Honorable Society announcing his arrival here early in September 1714, Mr. Clubb stated that on the seventh of that month he obtained the first subscriptions for building the present *edifice*, and that the people "*obliged themselves to make it good.*" Immediately after these subscriptions were raised however, tradition tells us that sharp debates were held whether the church should be erected on its present site or on a large lot of some 15 acres (known as the *Graveyard field*) situated near the junction of Sugartown and Reeseville roads. The present position being favorably decided upon, (on account of its proximity to a good spring) we learn from subsequent authorities that on the ninth (9th) day

of May in the year 1715 the foundation of the present church was laid, with appropriate formalities, and the building finally erected during the same year.

After settling in his cure Mr. Clubb preached to several congregations besides those specially committed to his charge, and by his zeal and energy secured the hearty good will of all his parishioners. But being forced to travel through all kinds of weather he contracted a severe illness from the effects of which he died in December, 1715.

Both Radnor and Oxford then wrote to the Honorable Society informing them of their sad calamity and requesting another missionary, assuring them that though their petitioners were but "*poor settlers in a wilderness,*" with debts yet to clear on their houses, they would nevertheless do their best to support any minister that the society might send. In compliance with this earnest entreaty the Society appointed the Rev. Evan Evans (already referred to) as their temporary missionary to Oxford and Radnor. Dr. Evans commenced his duties in the Spring of 1716, and preached at Radnor on alternative Thursdays until the Summer of 1718, then leaving for Maryland, his fortnight services were continued by the Rev. John Humphrey, then missionary at Chester, who supplied his place until the Honorable Society appointed as their missionary to the vacant cure the Rev. Robert Weyman, who commenced his duties in December, 1719.

The name of this active and energetic missionary, prominent in all conventions of the Episcopal Church at that time in Pennsylvania, is also subscribed to many letters addressed to the Honorable Society, important in their relation to the history of Radnor Church. Dr. Buchanan, in his "Historical Sketch of Oxford Parish," speaks of Mr. Weyman, as "A person of great worth, and very diligent in the discharge of his ministerial duties." We may justly add, that this missionary did not confine these *ministerial duties* to the churches immediately committed to his charge, but preached constantly at Conestogoe, near Lancaster, White Marsh, Perkiomen, or Evansburg, and in Chester Valley. At this latter place, the original log church was erected during his charge, about the year 1728.

Among other important events occurring during Mr. Weyman's term at Radnor, I notice the appointment of her first regular corps of church officers; during the early years of its history, the secular affairs of the church had evidently been managed by the church wardens, together with the whole congregation in a body, but on April 1st, 1725, the first vestry of twelve men was appointed "*To represent the whole congregation for the greater ease of the people in carrying on the affairs of the church.*"

Early in the year 1731, Mr. Weyman was removed to the more important sphere of missionary duty at St. Mary's Church, in Burlington, having retained the incumbency at Oxford and Radnor about eleven years, during which time, as Anderson remarks, "His course of ministry was marked by unvarying zeal and diligence on his part, and by the continued zeal and confidence of his increasing flock."

It may be well to notice here, that soon after Mr. Weyman's removal to Burlington, important changes were made in the division of the missionary field in Pennsylvania, by disuniting the churches of Oxford and Radnor, the former being joined with St. Thomas' Church, at White Marsh, the latter with St. James' Church, at Perkiomen.

After Mr. Weyman's removal, Radnor Church during nearly two years, had no settled minister, but in the old church register, I find a subscription list dated November 7th, 1731, wherein the subscribers promise to pay certain amounts "*For the use of Mr. Backhouse, who pretends, with God's assistance, to preach here once a month.*" The minister here referred to, is Richard Backhouse, then missionary at Chester. He was relieved of his duties at Radnor, by Mr. John Hughes, who arrived here early in the Spring of 1733, being sent by the Honorable Society as their missionary to Perkiomen and Radnor. In a letter to the Secretary of the Society, Mr. Hughes states that he visited "*Many Welsh and English*

gentlemen that lived far back in the woods, and for a long time had no other place to preach but under a large tree." This reference, as a subsequent letter indicates, marks an early period in the history of St. James' Church, at Conestagoe (already referred to.) At this time the services at Radnor were conducted in the Welsh language, and we find letters from Mr. Hughes to the Honorable Society, entreating that Welsh books may be sent to him. In these letters he so graphically describes the difficulties of his missionary life, and, yet so plainly shows how energetically he has performed his duties that our warmest interest cannot fail to be elicited in his memory. He was evidently one of the most active missionaries in the Province, and it is supposed that the final establishment of the first St. Peters' Church in Chester Valley (already referred to) was mainly due to his individual exertions.

Mr. Hughes retained the incumbency at Radnor for about three years, being succeeded in the summer of 1737, by the Rev. William Currie, another Society missionary, who, though of feebler constitution than his predecessor, lacked none of his worth or ability. In his many letters to the Honorable Society, and entries in the old parish register, Mr. Currie shows a style of writing indicative of his thorough education. In an article, dated May 2nd, 1760, giving some account of the missions in Pennsylvania, he is spoken of as a man "*Much esteemed, and neglecting no opportunity, that his health will permit, of doing his duty.*" And in another place we see that he was selected to preach the sermon before the Episcopal Convention of the Clergy of Pennsylvania. During the early part of this term at Radnor, in the spring and summer of 1740, John Whitfield, the Methodist Reformer, preached in our neighborhood, though there is no official record of his ever occupying our pulpit. The success attending the efforts of this great orator is very forcibly illustrated by the reluctant admission of Mr. Currie (to the Honorable Society,) that "This strolling preacher has created such a confusion among the people of this province as will not be laid in haste."

Among the important incidents occurring during this term, the following curious anecdote, showing the primitive simplicity of our church, so late as the middle of the Eighteenth Century, is certainly worthy of note. I repeat it as described by an authentic tradition:—"In June, 1763, very threatening rumors having reached Radnor concerning the devastations of the Indians, under Pontiac who had at that time advanced as far as Carlisle, Mr. Currie, on the Sunday after the arrival of the news, announced his text from Ecclesiastes vii—14—"In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity considerate." So eloquent was the old gentleman's discourse, that the congregation, impressed with a sense of their danger from an attack by the Indians, resolved themselves, before leaving the church, into a mutual protection association, and after due deliberation, returned to their houses, carefully cleaned and prepared all the guns and other weapons found in the neighborhood, and thus made full arrangements to resist the Indians should they approach. This Home-guard system continued, it is said, until Pontiac's peace and withdrawal in August, 1764."

Mr. Currie's term at Radnor was evidently the Elizabethian period of her history; not only do we read of the large congregations "*Especially at Radnor and ye Valley,*" (at which latter place the work inaugurated by his predecessors was completed by the erection, in the year 1744, of the present St. Peter's Great Valley Episcopal Church,) but in the old Register, we find a subscription list, dated "29th of July, 1771," by which money is collected for the erection of the present gallery in St. David's Church. This gallery was built under the supervision of General Wayne's father, then a warden at Radnor, and extended beyond its present limits, passing over the front door and joining unto the East wall. Besides this gallery, a school house was also built in the year 1740, and also a "*vestry house,*" about the same time; the former building stood on the knoll in front of the church, and has only recently been taken down. Of the position of the latter building, traditionary statements are very contradic-

tory. Persons present at Gen. Wayne's funeral, in 1809, insist that there was then no vestry room on the site of the present one; others are doubtful, and many inclined to think the house referred to in the old Register, was for St. Peter's Church in the Valley, but that there was a door on the North side of the church, time out of memory, no one denies, and in 1830, Mr. Brinckle (then rector of Radnor and St. Peter's Churches,) records among several improvements, the building of a vestry room at St. Peter's Church, and of a new one at Radnor.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary war, Mr. Currie declared that in accordance with his oath of office, he must continue to use the liturgy in behalf of King George, but as such an action would be contrary to the wishes of most of his parishioners, he was prevented from officiating, and finally in May, 1776, he formerly resigned his charge, having retained the incumbency nearly *half a Century*. After Mr. Currie had discontinued his charge at Radnor, the church during the entire Revolution was rarely opened for divine worship. Tradition tells us that the building and church property were at times a sort of rendezvous for different squads of soldiers, and that on the site of the present rectory (where was then a cedar thicket), Major Gen. Grey marshalled some of his troops preparatory to the massacre at Paoli, on the night of the 20th of September, 1777. It is also said that during their encampment in the neighborhood, the American soldiers cut the leaden sash out of the church windows and molded it into bullets. The windows at that time were composed of thirty or forty small diamond-shape panes of clear glass, held in place by just such leaden sash as are now used for ornamental windows. After the battle of Brandywine, in September 1777, many of the wounded were left at different farm-houses in the neighborhood, and tradition again tells us, that in the little hollow west of the gallery steps, sixteen soldiers were buried who had died from the effects of wounds received in that battle.

I have said that during the Revolution, Radnor Church was rarely opened for divine worship. A curious anecdote is, however, told of a Baptist preacher named David Jones (then in charge of the Great Valley Baptist Church, in Chester county,) who officiated here on one occasion shortly after Mr. Currie's withdrawal. After finishing the introductory formalities, old Davy Jones climbed into the lofty pulpit, and having announced his text, glanced around in order to assure himself of the attention of his audience; that one glance, however, completely disconcerted the worthy old gentleman. He saw seated comfortably before him, several young and active men (previously hidden from so close a scrutiny by the old-fashioned high-backed pews.) In an instant patriotism had so completely mastered him that he threw away his sermon, and shaking his finger vehemently at the astonished youths, demanded to know why they didn't go into the American army and fight the British. "I'm not afraid to go," he screamed, "they can't hurt me! They may kill me if they like, and make a drum-head of my old hide, but they'll play humy drum, drum humy, drum, drum, till the British are scared out of the country;" then ~~then~~ in wild excitement he throw off a heavy cloak which hung around his shoulders, and displayed an American uniform.

From the curious old legends we easily see into what terrible confusion the affairs of the church were inevitably turned, and when in 1783 old Mr. Currie again took charge of the parish, the energies of the vestry seems to have been principally devoted to raising money for repairing the church and graveyard walls, which as tradition has told us, had been roughly handled during the nine previous years. The fact that Mr. Currie resumed the charge of the old church so soon as the ratification of England's treaty with the United States, had absolved him from his oath of office, shows that our church must have been very dear to the old gentleman, who more than twenty years before had referred to the fact that "Infirmities and old age were approaching." He could hardly have been influenced in his course by hopes of material pecuniary reward, the church collections at that time being devoted, as we have seen, to the re-

pairs of the church, and his former pittance from the Honorable Society being of course discontinued.

Mr. Currie supplied the vacant cure at Radnor until the year 1788, and was then relieved of his duties by our first American minister, the Rev. Slaytor Clay. This gentleman having been ordained priest at St. Peter's Church, in Philadelphia, on February 17th, 1788, immediately undertook the incumbency of the Great Valley Episcopal Church, in Chester county, in connection with St. David's church at Radnor, St. James' at Perkiomen, and the Swede's Church near Norristown, and during the latter part of his term, preached also at St. Thomas' Church, in White Marsh. On account of this immense field of labor, Mr. Clay could not, during his entire connection with Radnor, preach here oftener than two or three times each month. He rode to church on horse-back, and generally (tradition tells us) omitted most of the formal preliminary service, in order to have a longer time for his sermon, which was always extemporaneous.

Before passing to other important incidents connected with this term, I feel justified in pausing to consider some facts relating to that venerable and good old gentleman, William Currie. With his resignation, ends the important era of the missionary ministers: He was the last person who ever officially used the English prayer book at Radnor; and as he was the last to use that old liturgy, so (it is probable) was he the first to use the new one of 1785. Under him also, was Radnor church admitted the Diocesan Convention of Pennsylvania, in 1786. Even after Mr. Clay had succeeded to the cure of the old church, Mr. Currie continued to live in our neighborhood for many years, and finally died here about 1803, a very old gentleman, and much respected, in spite of his Tory principles. His body (tradition tells us) was placed under the same slab that marks the grave of his first wife, but no additional inscription made thereon.

Among other important events occurring during Mr. Clay's term, I note that in August 1792, Radnor church was incorporated; Slaytor Clay being the first rector of the incorporated body, and John Jones and Thomas Read the first wardens. Thomas Mifflin was then Governor of Pennsylvania.

During Mr. Clay's incumbency the remains of Gen. Anthony Wayne were removed from the fortress, at Presqu'isle, to Radnor church yard, by his son, Col. Isaac Wayne, and at the same time, (July 4th, 1800,) the Pennsylvania State Society of the Cincinnati with due ritual ceremonies, placed over the grave of the illustrious dead, the present monument. The wonders of that day are still fresh in the minds of some of our church members; the First City troop of Philadelphia, under command of Mayor Robert Wharton, rode out to Radnor and performed the honors of war over the grave of the General, but so excessively hot was the day that one of the officers is said to have fainted while coming down the hill, near where the present parsonage stands. The hearse proceeded from Mr. Wayne's house to the church, and an old soldier, named Samuel Smiley is said to have marched before it all the way, refusing to ride, and, mourning the loss of his old commander.

After the ceremony of burial had been performed, old Davy Jones (already spoken of) delivered an oration from a very high platform, temporarily erected near the monument, and told the story of the *Paoli Massacre*. Tradition tells us that so many persons came to witness these ceremonies, that the surrounding trees actually broke with the weight of persons among their branches.

During the latter part of Mr. Clay's term at Radnor, some addition was made to the graveyard and the old walls repaired. Previously to this time, the graveyard limits extended from a point about ten feet north of Drake's monument, in lines running East and South; the first line running East, passed through the site of the present vestry room and intersected the East graveyard wall at a point, now noticeable by the sudden rise in its height. The other, (the South line,) intersected the front wall at a point where it begins to be dashed, and the old pointing ceases. The addition

to the graveyard now made, consisted in extending the West wall some thirty (30) feet north, and from the extremity of this extension, running a new wall in a northeastward direction so as to intersect the old one continued. This northeast wall formed the boundaries between Chester and Delaware counties. The church building was also somewhat repaired during Mr. Clay's term; and in the old register we find receipts for lime, masonry, carpenter work, &c. It is impossible to tell the exact time of these repairs; the receipts are dated all along from 1809 to 1815, inclusive.

Mr. Clay continued nominally to officiate at Radnor until his death, September, 1821, though he virtually withdrew some time before, and during the latter part of his term, he was assisted by other ministers: thus in 1807, the Rev. Caleb Hopkins is said to have preached here with some regularity on Sundays, when Mr. Clay was engaged elsewhere. In 1818, Mr. Clay's son, John C. Clay, officiated here about once a month, and during the same year, the Rev. Samuel C. Brinckle settled in our neighborhood, near Paoli, and at the request of the congregation, preached here every two weeks until Slaytor Clay's death, then succeeding to the cure, he preached every Sunday. To enable him to hold these weekly services, William Crosley, a very wealthy and influential member of the congregation, subscribed twenty dollars (\$20) to the support of a minister "*who would preach every Sunday.*" Animated by this generous example, other members also contributed, so that the rector's salary arose to nearly four hundred dollars (\$400.)

The condition of this parish in 1819 must have been a perfect wreck of the prosperous church over which Mr. Currie had lately officiated; the terrible reaction in the morals of the people after the Revolution, had not yet subsided, and sternly attested its presence by the fact that but a single individual communicated here when Mr. Brinckle commenced his labors.

On July 30, 1820, however, we see the records of the first confirmation service ever held at Radnor; Bishop White conducted the ceremonies, and added sixteen members to the church. Evidently, in the words of Mr. Weyman, (written nearly a century before this confirmation) "The people of Radnor need a person to reside among them for frequent conference with them."

During Mr. Brinckle's active and useful term at Radnor, our present Sunday School was organized; this was accomplished, as nearly as I can ascertain, about the year 1824. Old John Hunter was superintendent, and kept the books inside the old pulpit; Miss Mary Wilson, Mrs. Thomas and her daughter, and a few others were teachers, and their efforts are said to have been quite successful.

A little later than this time, viz: about the year 1830, the first important changes were made in the internal appearance of the old church by tearing down that part of the gallery which passed over the front door, substituting the present, for the old-fashioned, high-backed pews, and placing them so as to face the pulpit, which was enlarged and removed from its old position a little to the right of the present vestry room door, and placed in the present chancel; the old sounding board also, which was suspended from a hook, now to be seen high up in the north wall, was entirely removed. In addition to these alterations, a vestry house was built of about seventeen (17) feet square, on the site of the present Sunday School room. Though many persons regret these changes in the old church, none can wonder that they were made when we reflect that the part of the gallery removed, had become rickety, and the large and uncomfortable high-backed pews were often owned by inhospitable persons who did not hesitate to exclude others, not members of their family, and thus much of the church was monopolized. At St. David's church there was an old custom to sell land within the church walls on which the purchaser would "build ye pugh; and thus persons could, with some appearance of justice, exclude others from a pew, for which they not only paid a rent, but which their ancestors had actually built or owned.

Mr. Brinckle was a great favorite among his congregation, and during his ministry here, the number of church members was increased from one to twenty-four. He was evidently much interested in the antiquity of the parish, and extracts from the vestry minutes and old register shows that he took some trouble to investigate its early history. He used frequently to ride all around the country to bring members of the congregation to the church to help him dress it with laurel and cedar at Christmas. Corroborative of the preceding eulogies, Bishop Lee tells the following anecdote, viz:—"Once, during a very severe winter, Mr. Brinckle found at his church but a single hearer. He asked the man if he could sing. On his reply in the negative, he said, "Then I will sing a hymn and you may make melody in your heart." He then conversed with him faithfully and kindly, concluding with prayer. It was the means of this man's conversion to God."

During this term was inaugurated the custom of holding convocations, or associations, at the church during the summer or fall of every year.—The Rev. Levi Bull, Jehu C. Clay, Dr. Newton and many other prominent clergymen, almost invariably assisted on these occasions; and often the audience was so large as to necessitate the services to be held on the hill where the Rectory now stands, the church not accommodating nearly all the people.

After having retained the incumbency at Radnor about fourteen years, Mr. Brinckle formally resigned his charge in Dec. 1832. He was immediately succeeded by the Rev. Simon Wilmer, of whose short term here we have no official notice except that he kept no parochial statistics, and stayed but six months. Mr. Wilmer was the father of Rt. Rev. Jos. P. B. Wilmer, now Bishop of Louisiana, and is said to have been the first minister who ever wore a surplice at Radnor. He withdrew from his charge in July, 1833, and was succeeded in the following October, by the Rev. William Henry Rees, who resided on Lancaster turnpike, near Reeseville. Mr. Rees' ministry seems to have been a very prosperous one at Radnor, not only forty-six persons being added to the list of members, but some preparations were made for enlarging the old church, and a congregation's meeting was held in May, 1835, to discuss the feasibility of tearing down the East wall and building the church out over the graves of Mrs. Genl. Wayne and the Currie family. These alterations were strenuously opposed by some of the congregation, and Col. Isaac Wayne is said to have made a very eloquent argument against the change; the conservatives, nevertheless, were decidedly in the minority, the vote standing, "Isaac Wayne, Isaac Norton, John Mather, John Taylor and another man," in the negative, against about forty other persons, who were in favor of the alterations. Mr. Wayne's influence, however, prevented the execution of the plans, and shortly after this meeting, a committee appointed to ascertain the expenses of the changes, was discharged.

During Mr. Rees' term, the first By-laws governing the vestry of St. David's Church, were adopted, and efforts made to keep the church records in some little order. The increased prosperity of the old church rendered it almost necessary for Mr. Rees to devote his whole attention to the care of this parish, and on that account, the connection of our church with St. Peter's Valley Episcopal Church was formally discontinued from April 4, 1836.

In 1838 John Hunter (then warden at Radnor) purchased a house, about a mile and a quarter from the church, for a parsonage; but Mr. Rees considered this distance from the church too great and some difficulty arising between them, resulted in the resignation of both. Mr. Rees' resignation was accepted, September, 1838.

After Mr. Rees' resignation the Rev. William Peck was called to Radnor in October, 1838. This minister, during the first part of his term, boarded at a farm-house in the immediate vicinity of the church, but becoming dissatisfied, removed with his family to the old school-house and vestry-room, and in these two places he remained until 1844, at which time the present parsonage was built, wherein he continued to live during

the remainder of his term. Mr. Neck resigned the incumbency at Radnor, in October, 1845, having retained it about seven years. The Rev. Wm. W. Spear was chosen as his successor on January 6th, 1846, but there is no notice that he ever officiated here. He resigned his charge in March of the same year, and was immediately succeeded by the Rev. Breed Batchelor, who had supplied the place several months before he formally accepted the change. Mr. Batchelor retained the incumbency for a little more than a year and a half, resigning it in December, 1847. During the interim between Mr. Batchelor's resignation and the appointment of a successor, services were held at Radnor by the Rev. Thomas G. Allen, a home missionary who refused to hold any regular charge here, though he baptised several persons, officiated at several funerals and officially presided at the meeting which appointed Mr. John A. Childs rector of the parish on January 12th, 1848. During Mr. Childs' rectorship, in 1849, a fair was held on the church grounds, near the sheds, and with the proceeds thereof, aided by contributions, the graveyard was again enlarged by running the south and north walls westward, to the present sheds, the larger part of which were erected at the same time. This new burial ground was divided into lots which sold for ten dollars apiece; these were the first lots ever sold in our graveyard.

In the spring and summer of 1850, St. David's Corporation engaged in a suit against their sexton, Thomas Beaumont, who for several years had been gradually encroaching on their property, and had finally placed his fence so as to deprive the church of the use of spring house. In this suit, although Mr. Beaumont, as defendant, lost much of the land claimed by him, and was compelled to pay the costs of the suit, yet the church, also, is said to have lost some of her land, her only title to any part thereof, being by RIGHT OF POSSESSION.

In August, 1851, Mr. Childs resigned his charge of this parish, agreeing, however, to remain until his successor should be appointed; this successor was the Rev. Henry G. Brown, who commenced his duties in the summer of 1851, lay services being held during the interim.

During this gentleman's incumbency at Radnor, in 1852, the present Church of the Redeemer was built near Haverford College, and for three years Mr. Brown officiated at both parishes, preaching at St. David's in the morning, and at the Redeemer in the afternoon. During this term, also, the old pulpit, which was so large as to accommodate three persons, was removed, and a smaller one substituted, and the interior of the church thoroughly repainted and repaired; the parsonage also was enlarged by building the frame addition to the north side. Mr. Brown resigned the incumbency at Radnor, in the fall of 1855; his short term here had greatly endeared him to his parishioners, and his withdrawal caused general regret.

After Mr. Brown's resignation, the Rev. Richardson Graham was called to Radnor, in January, 1856, and retained the incumbency about five years. During Mr. Graham's rectorship several valuable improvements were made on the church property. In 1858 a large and substantial vault was built in the knoll in front of the church; and later, at a vestry meeting, held July 22d, 1860, preparations were made for newly-roofing the church, and tearing out the East wall in order to place the vestry-room at that end, besides other changes. This work had been partially contracted for, when, on August 28th, of the same year, an indignation meeting of Radnor churchmen assembled in the old building to protest against such alterations. These gentlemen quietly informed the vestry that they would permit no such decided alteration of the old edifice, and insisted that the church needed no repairs except a new roof. After a stormy discussion the vestry formally reconsidered and defeated the resolution for altering the church, and acceded to the demands of the congregation.

In 1860 the first photographs of St. David's church were taken by an amateur photographer boarding in the neighborhood, who from the proceeds of the sale of his pictures, aided by other contributors, purchased and presented to the church the present Silver Communion set and collection plates. The previous set were of pewter, and are supposed by

some persons to have been given to St. David's church by the congregation of Christ's church in Philadelphia, after they had received their handsomer set; more popular traditions, however, state that this old service was presented to Radnor by Queen Anne, probably through Mr. Clubb; yet other persons believe, from a mysterious entry in the old register, that this communion set was "The gift of Mr. William Davis to Radnor church." Evidently nothing definite is known on the subject.

In January, 1861, Mr. Graham formally withdrew from his connection at Radnor, and was succeeded in June of the same year, by the Rev. Thomas G. Clemson, Jr. Immediately after Mr. Clemson had entered upon his duties (in August, 1861) the congregation held a large fair in front of the church. This fair lasted three days, and from the proceeds thereof, St. David's church again enlarged her graveyard by purchasing about an acre of land north of the old yard, from George Phillips. During Mr. Clemson's rectorship the pulpit was entirely removed and the chancel arranged in the present style; the old lamp posts which stood at the door of every other pew, and on the other side of the chancel, were also removed, and the church illuminated by the present coal-oil lamps fastened in the walls. Externally, the appearance of the building was very much improved at this time by planting ivy on the South, East and West walls. Mr. Clemson resigned the incumbency at Radnor in June, 1866, having retained it five years. He was succeeded by the present rector, the Rev. William F. Halsey, who commenced his duties, Nov. 18, 1866. During Mr. Halsey's term several important events have occurred at the old church, on which I shall remark in order. On September 4th, 1867, the church celebrated its one-hundred and fiftieth anniversary on the erroneous supposition that the building was erected in 1717. At this anniversary the rector delivered a sermon containing a history of the old church, and to this sermon I am indebted for the outline at least of this present history. A very large number of persons were present on the occasion, and the formalities conducted with marked success.

In 1868-9 a movement was made among the church people living near the Lancaster turnpike, to erect another Episcopal church at or near Wayne station, P. R. R.; this movement was strongly opposed by many members of our congregation, who declared that such measures would weaken the support of Radnor; and when at length, in June, 1869, a formal letter from a committee delegated to represent the new church, was sent to our vestry requesting that their church might be taken under the "Guidance and care" of St. David's, the vestry after considerable deliberation, declined to have any connection with the new church. In 1869-70 the ground in front of the church was improved by being enclosed by a stone wall and gates; numerous shade and ornamental trees were also planted at this time. In January, 1871, the shedding was enlarged by extending it over a piece of land purchased from Mr. Phillips, lying north of the former sheds; and in the spring and summer of this same year, the church building having become much dilapidated by the falling off of the plaster in the inner side of the walls, and the decay of the pointing on the outer side, beside the complete wreck of the vestry room, a large subscription of more than a thousand dollars was raised for the repairs of the old church, and the work energetically prosecuted, great care being taken to preserve the antique appearance of the building. A new and commodious vestry-room was also built at this time on and beyond the site of the former house. This room was in dimensions about eighteen feet by twenty-nine feet, and furnished to serve as a Sunday school house. The interior of the church building was also much improved by a thorough repainting and repairing, the wainscoting on the East wall and arch over the chancel window being placed here at this time.

In the niche of the north wall of the old church was placed this simple inscription, "A. D. 1717." Tradition tells us that from this niche a large stone had fallen out many years before, bearing the date thereon, of "1717," and for this reason the same date was placed on the new tablet. As this date, however, flatly contradicts several official records,

I think we may justly conclude "1715" to be the proper date, and the tradition (as is often the case) incorrect.

In completing the narration of important events occurring during Mr. Halsey's term, I have only to add that in August, 1874, another very large fair for the benefit of the old church was held in the grove in front of the building; and that on the sixth of the following September was celebrated, with a few appropriate formalities, the church's one hundred and sixtieth anniversary. The success and interest attending each of these last mentioned events, show beyond controversy the presence of deep feelings of affection and reverence among the congregation towards the church—a feeling which time strengthens, death only can estrange. It must be reluctantly admitted that Old Radnor Church is not now in so prosperous a condition as in her earlier days; her list of members is not so large, nor is the interest in church-work so active; but no one, I venture to assume, will doubt, but that the many tender and affectionate associations with which the old church is surrounded, are stronger now than at any period in her history, and with such a foundation for future exertions, her prospects are by no means disheartening.

Such is the history of Old Radnor Church from its establishment during the reign of William III, of England, down to its present condition under the second presidential term of Ulysses S. Grant; a history quite as firmly linked with that of our Province and Commonwealth from its earliest records in dangers and trials, as that of any edifice now standing in Pennsylvania. I do not hesitate to say that these walls and the surrounding graveyard, should be dearer, more revered by Pennsylvanian church people of this age, than the ivy crowned towers of Kenilworth and Dover to an Englishman. The history of St. David's Church, though often obscured by the gloom of war and infidelity, ever attests the presence of that "Peace which passeth all understanding;" while the history of the old castles only reminds us that

"Man's inhumanity to man,
Makes countless thousands mourn."

One hundred and seventy-four years does not seem a very long period in history until we contrast the condition of our Country then, with its present condition. It carries us back to times when Oldmixon who wrote eight years after the establishment of Radnor Church, speaks of Philadelphia as a place "Dignified by the name of city," and assures us that it "contains nearly twelve hundred houses."

Radnor church was established three years before the birth of John Wesley, and seven years before the birth of the oldest of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. It was built seventeen years before the birth of George Washington. Sir Willom Blackstone wrote his immortal Commentaries more than forty years after the erection of this church, and Napoleon Bonaparte, Lord Byron and Walter Scott were all born more than half a century after its erection. Old Radnor Church has stood while many generations have rolled away; while Kingdoms, Empires, Republics have been born, have flourished and decayed. Like the church of Christ, whose doctrines have, here, always been inculcated, it stands to-day unmoved, unaltered.

Having now completed this historical sketch, I cannot more aptly conclude my remarks than by repeating the eloquent peroration delivered by the Rev. Mr. Halsey on the occasion already referred to:

"And now when another century and a half shall have passed, and we and our children, and all who are living at this present moment, shall be sleeping in our graves, may it be that these walls shall still remain in a state of good preservation, and the faith 'once delivered to the saints, be held fast.' God bless and protect the old church, and make all who worship within her walls to become 'Holy and humble men of heart.'"

The following appendix of authorities may gratify the curiosity of some interested reader (should any there be) and warrant several novel statements:

APPENDIX.

Extracts from Dr. Perry's Historical Collections. (1871.)

[Certificate in behalf of Dr. Evans, enclosed in his letter, dated June 29th, 1719.]

"Most Noble Lords and Honorable Gentlemen."—"This is to certify that the Rev. Dr. Evans has preached the gospel at Radnor at the house of Mr. William Davis, one of the subscribers, once a fortnight from November, in the year 1700, all the time he was resident in Philadelphia, without any reward from us, and since his return from England, which was on the 22nd day of March, 1716-17, until the latter end of June past, he preached at St. David's church, at Radnor, and at Trinity church, at Oxford, alternately every other Thursday, viz:—One Thursday here, and another Thursday at Oxford, aforesaid; which time he deported himself with prudence in all respects becoming a person of his sacred character. We desire your pious and charitable consideration, and that you would be pleased to send us a minister to preach the gospel in the British language; and though we are somewhat numerous, we cannot promise to allow any minister above thirty pounds (£.) per annum, Pennsylvania money.....Mr. Humphreys preacheth here when the affairs of his other churches will permit."

SIGNED: MERRICK DAVIS, EVANS HUGHES, Church Wardens; THOS. EDWARDS, WM. DAVIS, and others.

[Mr. John Clubb, to the Secretary of the Honorable Society.]

Oxford, Pa., October 6th, 1714.

"May it please your Honor,"—"My safe arrival at Port of Philadelphia was (thanks be to God) upon the 24th of August, after a long passage of thirteen weeks, and the encountering of several difficulties..... In a few days after, when my effects were delivered me, I entered upon my charge at Radnor and Oxford where the people were well satisfied and ready to receive me, and Mr. Humphreys as willing to go to Chester as the Society were pleased to appoint him their missionary to that place..... The people of Radnor were very thankful to ye Hon'ble Corporation..... They met me unanimously upon the day appointed, viz: upon the seventh of the last month, and at the same time heartily engaged to build a handsome stone church. They subscribed that day a tolerable sum towards the carrying of it out, and obliged themselves to make it good; and for the rest I shall use all the means I am able to effect by collection. Indeed there are a large congregation of well affected people to the principles of the church and deserved your charitable consideration long before. Their promise is now much the same as that mentioned in their address by me, viz: of making what provision they are able for their minister, though no certain yearly stipend." May it please your Honor, &c.

JOHN CLUBB.

[Extracts from the Old Register.]

Thursday, April 1st, 1725.

"At a meeting of the ministers and members of the church of St. David's in Radnor, t'was proposed the new church wardens should be named for the ensuing year, and a vestry appointed, not exceeding twelve in number, to represent the whole congregation, for the greater ease of the people in carrying on the affairs of the church."

Church Wardens, Evans Hughes, Griffith Howell; Vestrymen, William Davis, James Price, Thomas David, Joseph Coleman, William Moore, John Hunter, Anthony Wayne, Thomas James, David Evans, William Evans, Peter Elliot, John David.

"At a meeting held Dec. 5th, 1763, the vestry granted to Robert Jones the privilege to build a pew on a piece of ground in St. David's Church, adjoining Wayne & Hunter's pew; he paying for ye ground four pounds ten shillings."

November 23d, 1767.

"Then Robert Jones paid into the hands of the present church wardens, the above sum."

[Extract from Accrelius' History of New Sweden, 1874.]

"*The Laying of a Corner Stone.*—On the 9th day of May, 1715, Pastor Sandel was invited to attend the laying of the foundation of Radnor church, sixteen miles from Philadelphia. First a service with preaching was held in a private house, then they went in procession to the place where the church was to be built; then a prayer was made, after which each one of the clergymen laid a stone according to the direction of the master mason."

(FINIS.)