

BRONZE TABLET ON ST. JAMES'S CHURCH

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

THE memory of ten Lancaster patriots who served America during the Revolutionary War is commemorated by a handsome bronze tablet, four feet long by two feet and a half wide which was placed on the south wall of St. James's Protestant Episcopal church, Lancaster, on Friday, March 27th, 1931. The tablet was erected by St. James's church school, with money obtained at Christmas, 1929, and represents the school's birthday gift to the King of kings. The tablet was designed by the James H. Matthews Company, Pittsburgh, Pa.; and the inscription, which is as follows, was prepared by the rector, the Rev. Dr. Clifford Gray Twombly:

"In honor of members of St. James' church who served America during the time of the Revolution: George Ross, signer of the Declaration of Independence: Major General Edward Hand, friend and companion in arms of General George Washington: Edward Shippen, chairman of the committee of correspondence: Judge William Augustus Atlee, chairman of the committee of public safety: Colonel Matthias Slough, Major John Light, Lieutenant Wilder Bevins, officers in the war: Judge Jasper Yeates, Robert Coleman, Captain Stephen Chambers, three of the six Lancaster delegates to the State Convention which ratified the Constitution of the United States."

It will be noted that the name of the apostle in whose honor the church was dedicated, is written *James'* on the bronze tablet. Inasmuch as there seems to be a difference of opinion in this modern day as to the correct way of writing the possessive form of this proper noun, it might be well to ascertain how the founders of this ancient parish, and, incidentally, the people who named and were specially interested in the church, wrote the word.

When St. James's parish was organized on Wednesday, October 3rd, 1744, no name appears to have been given to it, and for a number of years the organization was simply referred to as "the church in Lancaster," "the mission in Lancaster," and, occasionally, "the Church of England in Lancaster." Under date of

Sunday, January 7th, 1753, is the following entry in the old vestry book:

“At a meeting of ye vestry Thomas Cookson, Esqr. and William Jevon, Esqr. made their report that everything was finished in ye church according to ye minutes of ye above vestry; and that now a plan of a platform was wanted whereupon to build pews. But this proposal requiring some consideration, it was agreed that every member who had a mind, should bring a plan with him [to the] next meeting of ye vestry, and that which should be approved of by ye majority should be executed.”

The vestry again met on Thursday, February 1st. Thomas Cookson agreed to “procure,” without any expense to the congregation, locust timber for “ground sills” upon which to lay the platform. During the time that intervened between this meeting of the vestry and the next, which was held on Tuesday, May 15th, the platform in the church was completed, and a number of pews were erected by the parishioners.

On page 8, of the minute book of the vestry, under date of February 1st, 1753, is a plan of the interior of the church, showing the arrangement of the communion table, and the pulpit,—with its top desk, from which the rector preached; its middle desk, from which the prayers were read; and its lower desk, from which the parish clerk made the responses. Pews for members and seats for servants are also shown. Beneath the drawing, written in a legible hand, is the following statement:

“The Church being now almost finished, it is designed by ye name of *St. James's Church* in ye Borough of Lancaster.” So far as known, this is the first use of the name.

The minute book contains many examples of this form of the word. Whenever the vestry held a meeting, a record was made in the book, and although the phraseology of the sentences varied slightly, the name was always the same. The form generally used, was: “At a meeting of the congregation of *St. James's Church*,” or “At a meeting of the Wardens and Vestry of *St. James's Church*.”

Not only in the records of the ancient parish does the word appear in the manner indicated, but also in the then current publications. The *Pennsylvania Gazette*, a newspaper published in Philadelphia, contained an advertisement, under date of Thursday,



IN HONOR OF
MEMBERS OF ST JAMES' CHURCH
WHO SERVED AMERICA DURING
THE TIME OF THE REVOLUTION

GEORGE ROSS

SIGNER OF

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

MAJOR GENERAL EDWARD MANN
FRIEND AND COMRADE IN ARMS OF
GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON

EDWARD SHIPPEN

CHAIRMAN OF

THE COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE

JUDGE WILLIAM AUGUSTUS ARLIE

CHAIRMAN OF

THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

COLONEL MATTHEW SLOUGH

MAJOR JOHN LIGHT

LIEUTENANT WILDER BEVINS

OFFICERS IN THE WAR

JUDGE JASPER VILATES

ROBERT COLEMAN

CAPTAIN STEPHEN CHAMBERS

MEMBERS OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE DELEGATES
TO THE STATE CONVENTION WHICH RAISED
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

March 12th, 1761, of a "Scheme of a lottery for raising 1350 dollars for the use of *St. James's Church*, in the Borough of Lancaster;" and the issue of Thursday, June 11th, 1761, contained a "List of the numbers that came up prizes in the *St. James's Church* lottery in Lancaster." The issue of Thursday, July 9th, 1761, contained an advertisement of another lottery to raise 565 dollars "to enable the Wardens and Vestry of *St. James's Church*, Lancaster, to complete the work begun by them." The list of numbers that had drawn prizes, was published in the Gazette of Thursday, May 20th, 1762.

On October 16th, 1762, the wardens and vestrymen sent a communication to the Rev. Dr. Daniel Burton, secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, London, England, appealing for funds to complete the church, erect a gallery and secure a bell. It was accompanied by an architect's drawing of the church building, on which is legibly written, "*St. James's Church*, in the Borough of Lancaster."

In The Lancaster County Historical Society is the original book, kept by a former treasurer of *St. James's* parish, Jasper Yeates. It is in the writing of Judge Yeates, who was treasurer from December 25th, 1771, to December 12th, 1816. At the top of each page, on the debit side of the book, appears the following: "Dr., J. Yeates to *St. James's Church*."

Jasper Yeates was a Justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and at his death had one of the finest libraries in Lancaster. This distinguished jurist was, unquestionably, one of the most intelligent men of the community; and in view of the fact that a man of his scholarly attainments wrote the word in the form stated above, is strong evidence that that was the correct way to use it.

When the bell was purchased in 1770, in England, it was cast with the following inscription, by order of the vestry: "*St. James's Church*, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, 1770." It bore this inscription until 1858, when it cracked while being rung for a service. Subsequently, it was recast, and to-day bears the following inscription: "Pack & Chapman of London. *Fecit. St. James's Church*, Lancaster, Pennsylvania."

The Lancaster County Historical Society has in its collections

the original records of the "Female Sunday-School Society of *St. James's Church*." The book contains the constitution and minutes of the first parochial Sunday school in Lancaster, and is in the writing of the secretary, Miss Letitia Montgomery. Each time she referred to the name of the church, she wrote it, "*St. James's Church*." It will be recalled that this school was organized by the Rev. Dr. William Augustus Muhlenberg, a distinguished churchman and scholar. In May, 1822, Dr. Muhlenberg published the first annual report of the school. It was printed by John Reynolds, publisher and editor of the Lancaster Journal. The title page bears the following: "Female Sunday School of *St. James's Church*, Lancaster."

On Sunday evening, July 23rd, 1826, Dr. Muhlenberg preached his farewell sermon in Lancaster as associate rector of *St. James's church*. The sermon was published by order of the vestry. It was issued from the printing establishment of Sleight & Tucker, Jamaica, L. I., and the title page contained the following: "A Valedictory Sermon preached in *St. James's Church*, Lancaster," etc.

In the library of The Lancaster County Historical Society are books which were originally the property of the Sunday school of *St. James's church*. The Sunday-school library was founded during the rectorate of the Rev. Joseph Clarkson. The "home-made" book plates contain the following: "Library of *St. James's Church* Sunday School, Lancaster."

Other examples, quite as convincing, could be given to support the claim that for more than a century and a half, the edifice which gives distinction to the second block of North Duke street, was referred to as "*St. James's Church*." As late as 1894, the printed program containing the order of services for Easter Day, published at the expense of the parish, had on its front page the words, "*St. James's Church*, Lancaster."

The writer has carefully investigated the use of the word by prominent members of the church itself, because there are those who maintain that the word "James," in the possessive case, should be used only with the apostrophe; they also claim that usage usually makes a word correct. If we are to accept this challenge, then we have more than 150 years of continuous use to guide us

in writing it "*James's*." That the local congregation has been referred to as "*St. James's*" church for generations, is clearly proven by written records, legal documents, and published papers.

We trust that these proofs, which cannot be successfully controverted, will serve to dispose of the claim of those who insist that the present generation would not like to have its parish referred to as "*St. James's*" church, when, as has been clearly shown, it has been so-called and described by devout and intelligent members of the parish for more than a century and a half.

ARCHITECT'S DRAWING OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING OF ST. JAMES'S CHURCH

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

THE Rev. Richard Locke, a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, with headquarters in London, England, came to Lancaster early in October, 1744. Episcopalians living in this vicinity, held a meeting on Wednesday, October 3rd, of that year, organized a congregation, and agreed to give Mr. Locke all the encouragement they could, provided he would reside in Lancaster and minister to them. Two wardens and six vestrymen were chosen at this time.

At a meeting of the vestry held on Easter Monday, April 15th, 1745, Thomas Cookson, Esq., one of the most prominent men in the community, was appointed to receive subscriptions for the erection of a stone church for the use of members of the Church of England, residing in the vicinity. James Hamilton, Esq., granted lots No. 35 and 36 on the plan of the town, subject to a yearly quit rent, for the use of the congregation. Thirty-one persons contributed £105, 4s. With this encouragement, the congregation began the erection of a building, forty-four feet long by thirty-four wide. Thomas Cookson was appointed to superintend its construction.

Work on the building progressed slowly. In a letter, dated October 16th, 1746, to the Rev. Dr. Philip Bearcroft, secretary of