

# THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASTER COUNTY

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

**I**N a history of Lancaster county by I. Daniel Rupp, published in 1844, it is stated, on page 457, that ministers of the Church of England visited Lancaster county as early as 1717 or 1719. No authority, however, is given for the statement. In 1869, a work, entitled "An Authentic History of Lancaster County," was published. On page 451, the author, Rev. Dr. Jacob Isidor Mombert, repeated the above statement from Rupp's history. Dr. Mombert, a voluminous writer, and an author of unusual ability, was the co-rector of St. James's Protestant Episcopal church, Lancaster, from 1859 to 1861; and rector from 1861 to 1869. It would seem that a man of his scholarly attainments would not have made the statement unless he had made a careful investigation of the subject. In 1883, another history of the county, compiled by Franklin Ellis and Samuel Evans, was published, and is generally regarded as being the best so far issued. On page 464, in an article contributed by the Rev. Dr. Cyrus Frederick Knight, rector of St. James's church from 1877 to 1889, it is stated that as early as 1717-8, the clergy of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (a missionary organization of the Church of England) began their ministrations in what is now the city of Lancaster. This, also, is, in substance, a repetition of what appeared in the preceding histories.

In 1902 the Rev. Wilson Waters prepared an historical sketch of St. James's church, which was published in the year-book issued by the parish. On page 115, he states that clergymen of the Church of England visited Lancaster (then known as Conestoga) in 1717 or 1719. This, also, is practically a repetition of what appeared in previous historical works; and, like his predecessors, he gives no authority for the statement. Mr. Waters, who was serving as curate of St. James's church at the time he prepared his sketch, added the following:

“The Rev. Robert Weyman, a missionary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, was in this region at that period, a man of great worth, zeal and diligence, whom Governor Gordon described as ‘a very good man.’ He died in 1737, with his armor on.” Mr. Weyman resided at Oxford and also supplied the church at Radnor until his removal to the mission at Burlington, N. J., in the fall of 1730.

Dr. H. M. J. Klein, in a history of Lancaster county published in 1924, states, on page 829: “Weyman had been in the vicinity in 1717 or 1719, but had probably gone beyond, for there were very few to whom he could preach in Lancaster so early.” Dr. Klein’s reference to “gone beyond” probably means that Mr. Weyman had left Lancaster and gone farther west.

It is my purpose in this paper to correct some of the impressions about the introduction of services according to the Church of England in Lancaster county; and I shall support my statements by documentary evidence.

The Church in this region owes its inception to the zeal of missionaries of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, chartered on June 16th, 1701.<sup>1</sup> The institution of this venerable Society grew out of the spiritual needs of the American plantations, and was, in the main, inspired by the Rev. Thomas Bray. It was an outgrowth and development of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, of which Dr. Bray was also the chief promoter. It had its origin in 1699; and its work in foreign parts had been, “the fixing parochial libraries throughout the plantations, especially on the continent of North America.” After Dr. Bray’s visit to Maryland, as commissary, from which he returned to England in 1700, he made an appeal to the crown “to make such other provision as shall be necessary for the propagation of the gospel in those parts.” The Lower House of Canterbury appointed a committee, early in 1701, to consider the subject. Archbishop Tenison, Bishop Compton, and others, favored the project. The result was that on June 27th, 1701, The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts held its first meeting in Lambeth Palace, the Archbishop of Canterbury presiding. Many

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<sup>1</sup> “Two Hundred Years of the S. P. G.,” by C. F. Pascoe, Keeper of the Records, London, 1901, p. 932.

bishops and distinguished churchmen, clerical and lay, were present. To the earnest, generous and constant devotion of this Society, the colonial churches were more indebted than to all other sources combined. Its course was distinguished by wisdom from the beginning. In an effort to secure a preliminary survey of the field, it appointed one who knew the country and its needs, and who possessed, moreover, all the enthusiasm of a recent convert to the Church.

The Rev. George Keith, the first "missioner" appointed by the Society, was originally educated for the Presbyterian ministry. He was a fellow student of Bishop Burnet at Aberdeen. After graduation, he became a preacher among the Quakers in New Jersey and Pennsylvania; and after a dispute with the Society of Friends concerning the value of external as contrasted with internal revelation, became the leader of a schism. He finally conformed to the Church, about 1700, and was sent as the first itinerant missionary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "to traverse the colonies, inquire into the spiritual condition of the people, and to awaken them to the importance and reality of the Christian religion." From the information gathered by him and his volunteer assistant, Rev. John Talbot, the Society began the work of appointing and sending out missionaries.<sup>2</sup>

A rule of the Society required that the missionaries "send home every six months" a *notitia parochialis*, which was to be a report of the ecclesiastical census of the people and a half-yearly statement of baptisms, marriages and burials.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this, the missionaries sent to the secretary of the Society detailed accounts of their personal activities. It is from these reports that we are able to get much of our information of what transpired here in the early days. The original letters are preserved in the Society's headquarters in London, England. Transcripts of them are in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

#### THE MISSION AT CONESTOGA (CHURCHTOWN)

That the Rev. Robert Weyman did not officiate in Lancaster

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<sup>2</sup> "A History of the Protestant Episcopal Church," by Charles Comfort Tiffany, 1895, pp. 278-9.

<sup>3</sup> "Historical Notices of the Missions of the Church of England," by Ernest Hawkins, 1845, p. 85.

county in 1717-8, and, very likely, not in 1719, is owing to the fact that he did not arrive in America until November 26th, 1719.<sup>4</sup> He settled at Oxford, and supplied Radnor and White Marsh, and occasionally preached in Philadelphia.<sup>5</sup> In a letter dated Oxford, Pennsylvania, October 1st, 1726, to the secretary of the Society, Mr. Weyman wrote as follows:

“The harvest is, indeed, great but the laborers very few and small, and the want of them has even necessitated me to double my diligence in the work of my ministry to be in a manner an itinerant missionary in the several parts of this Province on the week days, when I may be spared from my immediate flock, for the propagation of the Christian faith and for the admission of believers and their children into the Church by baptism. I have traveled often for this end to Conestoga, which is above forty miles beyond Radnor, which is twenty miles from Oxon [Oxford], the place of my residence. I have baptized there, and elsewhere, seventy-eight children the last year and have undergone no small fatigue in the said journeys and have subjected myself to very considerable expenses in traveling from place to place.”

Late in the spring of 1728, Mr. Weyman returned to England on a furlough, to visit his aged parents.<sup>6</sup> In a communication dated London, August 3rd, 1728, and addressed to The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, he described conditions as they existed in the Province of Pennsylvania at that time. The letter was entitled: “The Memorial of their lately arrived mission-

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<sup>4</sup> Rev. John Humphreys, Chester, Pa., on November 30th, 1719, wrote to the secretary of the S. P. G.: “I fully expected a letter from you by Mr. Weyman, who arrived here about a fortnight ago in Capt. Wells, etc.” In a letter to the secretary, dated Philadelphia, June 26th, 1720, the Rev. Mr. Weyman stated: “I arrived ye 26th of November, 1719.” There is a discrepancy in the date of Mr. Weyman's arrival. If Mr. Humphrey is correct in his statement, Mr. Weyman arrived in America about November 16th, or ten days earlier than is stated in Mr. Weyman's letter of June 26th, 1720.

<sup>5</sup> “History of Old St. David's church,” by Harry Pleasants, 1907, pp. 23-29.

<sup>6</sup> In a letter dated New Castle, May 17th, 1728, the Rev. George Ross stated that the letter which he was writing would be put into the hands of the secretary of the S. P. G., by the Rev. Robert Weyman, who was about to sail for England. In a letter dated June 7th, 1728, the Rev. Archibald Cummings also stated that he is sending it to the secretary by the bearer, Mr. Robert Weyman.

ary from Pennsylvania in America." Among other things, he said:

"There were no more than three Church ministers when I came into the country [Pennsylvania], and just the same number when I left it. I persuade myself nobody will gainsay it, nor deny but that the country should be better supplied. I must own to you that the paucity of ministers has all along laid me under a necessity of extending my labors beyond my line, and of traveling from place to place to keep the people steadfast in the faith, and to dispense the Word and sacraments to them, even as far as Conestogo, which is seventy miles from the place of my habitation." This probably refers to the region in and around Lancaster city.

Mr. Weyman returned to America early in the year 1729.<sup>7</sup> During his stay in England, the congregation now known as Bangor church, Churchtown, Lancaster county, was supplied a part of the time by the Rev. Jonas Lidman, who was sent over from Sweden to minister in Pennsylvania, in 1719, and was recalled in 1730.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Lidman preached two sermons in Churchtown, then called Conestoga, as is evident from the following:

"This is to certify that the Rev. Mr. Lidman, missionary to the Swedish congregation at Wicacoa [Gloria Dei, 'Old Swedes,' Philadelphia] has preached to our congregation here at Canistogue, being a place scituate about forty-five miles from Philadelphia, two sermons, viz. on [Wednesday and Thursday] the 28th and 29th days of August, 1728. In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands at Canistogue the 29th day of August, 1728.

"Geo. Hudson, Gabriel Davies, Edward Thomas, Philip David, John Davies, John Howell, Hugh David."

This document, which is in the Society's archives in London, England, is especially valuable because it proves two things: That there was an organized congregation of the Church of England at Churchtown, Lancaster county, Pa., in 1728; and that the place at

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<sup>7</sup> Under date of Philadelphia, February 7th, 1729, the Rev. Archibald Cummings wrote to the secretary: "I received yours of September ye 23rd by Mr. Weyman, etc." By this he meant that Mr. Weyman was the bearer of a letter from the secretary in London to Mr. Cummings in Philadelphia.

<sup>8</sup> "Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church," 1871, Vol. II, p. 515, edited by William Stevens Perry.

that time was called Conestoga. The congregation, however, was without a church building.<sup>9</sup>

In October, 1730, a vacancy having occurred in the important mission field at St. Mary's church, Burlington, N. J., by the death of the Rev. Mr. Howard, Mr. Weyman made application to the Society for the appointment to that charge. His petition was favorably considered, and during that year he removed to Burlington, where he remained until his death, November 28th, 1737.<sup>10</sup>

Early in the winter of 1732-3, the Rev. Griffith Hughes probably arrived in Pennsylvania as the Society's missionary to Radnor and Perkiomen.<sup>11</sup> In a letter to the secretary, dated "Radnor, Pennsylvania, March 2, 1733-4," he wrote, in part, as follows:

"I have the pleasure of acquainting the Honorable Society at my first entry upon my mission I was very kindly received, especially by the Welsh. In my immediate proceedings after my arrival I endeavored at those methods that would best answer the trust reposed in me, and to that end besides performing those duties that particularly belong to my office I have visited all my parishioners at their respective houses and found a great many of them much neglected in their education and ignorant of the very fundamentals of religion; and others whose principles were very much vitiated with false doctrines. I endeavored to rectify the mistakes of the latter, and to instruct the former what was necessary to be believed and practised. I had no sooner finished this task than I found a great necessity of visiting a great many Welsh and English gentlemen that lived far back in the woods, where I found a great number of well-disposed persons, but entirely destitute of a minister. At their earnest request I have gone there several times since, and for a long time had no other place to preach than under the

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<sup>9</sup> In the year 1734 the members of Bangor church, sent a petition to the S. P. G. in which it is stated that until the arrival of the Rev. Griffith Hughes they had "no other conveniency than the shade of any large tree to preach under." As Mr. Hughes was appointed the Society's missionary to Radnor in October, 1732 (Pleasants, p. 30), and probably arrived in America early in the winter of 1732-3, we know for a certainty that a church was not erected at Churchtown until 1733 or 1734. There was a church building there in the latter year because in the petition referred to it is stated that "now we have built a handsome church."

<sup>10</sup> Pascoe, p. 852, and Pleasants, p. 29, give 1739 as the date of his death.

<sup>11</sup> Pleasants, p. 30.

shade of a large tree, their houses being too small to contain the great number that resorted there. My last journey to them completed in all 1105 miles, besides my weekly attendance at Radnor and Perkiomen, at either of which churches I preach and catechize every Sunday."

The settlement, "far back in the woods," which Mr. Hughes visited, was undoubtedly Churchtown, Lancaster county, Pa.

On December 3rd, 1734, Mr. Hughes sent the following letter to the secretary :

"Since my last, I have nothing worth notice to acquaint you and the Honorable Society except that I have made several journeys to visit the back inhabitants, sometimes sixty or seventy miles from home, where I christened a great number. But in more particular at Canistogo, where, for some time past, I preached both in Welsh and English, on the first Tuesday in every month; and have at present the pleasure of seeing the number of communicants there from twelve increase to twenty-six, all sober and well-disposed persons. The greatest inconveniency that we labor under is the greatest scarcity of Welsh books, myself being the only person that officiates in that language. My best endeavors can bear no proportion to the general want of so many thousands of that nation who are scattered in this Province, and daily importune me to supply them with Welsh books, and most of them are both able and willing to purchase them. And I humbly conceive that [if] their expectations were answered it would be (especially where orthodox ministers are wanting) the only means to keep our religion in its purity among so many disadvantages. I would rather be thought impertinent in troubling the Honorable Society with my sentiments upon this head than blame myself for not endeavoring at so great an act of charity that may, with the blessing of God, put a stop to those fatal consequences which by daily experience we find to be occasioned in a great measure by the want of good books. And if the Honorable Society, who have hitherto distinguished themselves by a continual series of benevolent and charitable actions, will so far encourage this as to permit me to come to London the latter end of next summer I doubt not but in a short time, with the assistance of a worthy gentleman now in Jesus College, we shall be able to reprint or translate a sufficient number [of books] to answer

the present necessity. The favor of hearing from you early in the spring will very much oblige,

“Yours, etc.,

“Griffith Hughes.”

In 1734, members of the Church of England residing in what is now Caernarvon township, Lancaster county, Pa., sent the following petition to the Society:

“The Inhabitants of Canestogoe, Pennsylvania. May it please The Honorable Society for Propagating the Gospell in Foreign Parts. The Petition of the underneath subscribers at Canestogoe, humbly sheweth:

“That we being well affected to the Church of England, though destitute for several years of an orthodox minister until the coming of our dear countryman Mr. Hughes, who hath undergone great hardship to come and preach to us once a month to our great comfort. We are increased very much in number since his coming; and since we can't as yet expect the happiness of a missionary, we humbly pray to be supplied with some Welsh books, the want of which has been our greatest unhappiness. An unhappy experience of this we have had in the number of forty families that were educated in the principles of the Church of England, that came in together, yet for the want of good books in their own language, they at last yielded to the general corruption of Quakerism. Would the Honorable Society be pleased to bestow on us a Welsh Bible and Common Prayer [Book] for the use of our church? Your petitioners should esteem it as a great favor. At Mr. Hughes' first arrival, we had no other conveniency than the shade of any large tree to preach under, but now we have built a handsome church. As for the other Welsh books, we are willing to purchase them at any reasonable rate. We have entrusted the Rev. Mr. Hughes to take the trouble upon him to come over and get us such a quantity as will be answerable to our want; if this be agreeable to the Honorable Society's pleasure it will be a great encouragement to our pure doctrine, and be a means in the hand of Providence to preserve many souls from false doctrine and schisms, which unhappiness we have too often experienced.

“We hope that your charity, which hath already distinguished itself for the eternal welfare of so many souls, will encourage this



one humble request; and until we can hope for a missionary, beg to be supplied at any rate with Welsh books, which is the earnest request and the humble petition of the undernamed, and indeed of our whole church here in general.

“And your petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

“George Hudson, John Davies, Edward Davies, Evan Hughes, Edward Nicholas, Roger Parry, Morgan Morgan, John Evans, Jenkin David, John Brown, Morgan John, Solomon Thomas, Gab’l Davies, Philip David, Hugh David, Nathaniel Evans, John Edwards, Badam David, John David, Zacheus David, Wm. Willy, Edward Thomas, John Jones and Moriss Richard.”

On September 10th, 1735, the Rev. Mr. Hughes addressed a letter to the Lord Bishop of London, in which he renewed his plea for permission to return to England for the purpose of translating and reprinting books in the Welsh language, which were to be supplied to his countrymen residing in Pennsylvania, at their own expense. He stated that the lack of books in the Welsh language was the chief reason for so many of his people becoming dissenters. Mr. Hughes stated that the present time would be most opportune for him to return to England, for on one of his recent visits to Perkiomen church he had had the misfortune to break his knee pan. Fortunately, it was mending, although it had weakened him to such an extent that it would be impossible for him, in his present condition, to serve the Perkiomen church during the coming winter in a regular order. “That, and several other hardships, which I have with pleasure almost, endured,” he wrote to his Lordship, “in my several journeys to preach among the back inhabitants, hath very much impaired my health being often obliged in the day to want the common necessaries of life, and in the night to be contented with the shade of a large tree for a lodging.”

In June, 1736, the Rev. Archibald Cummings, rector of Christ church, Philadelphia, and commissary for the Bishop of London, wrote a letter to the secretary of the Society, in which he informed him that the Rev. Griffith Hughes, the Society’s missionary stationed at Radnor, had been absent from his mission for more than seven months. During his absence, the Rev. Robert Weyman, Rev. Richard Backhouse and Rev. Alexander Howie acted as supplies. Mr. Hughes left his mission the latter part of November, 1735, and

did not return to Pennsylvania until June of the following year, having been absent for seven months. Mr. Cummings suggested to the secretary that it would be a generous act on the part of the Society to allow Mr. Hughes his salary during the time he was absent. Ill health was the cause of his visit to the Barbadoes, and he was put to considerable expense because the people were displeased at his leaving and would not allow him anything.

Mr. Hughes wrote to the secretary, on June 25th, 1736, as follows:

"I hope by this time the Honorable Society are informed by the hands of the Rev. Mr. Commissary Johnson, of my being at Barbadoes. The chief reason for my going there was as unexpected as unavoidable, and nothing but an absolute necessity would have obliged me to quit my mission without the previous consent of the Society. At the earnest request of a very considerable number of both Welsh and English, who live near Tolpahockin, seventy miles from town, I officiated there and at Canistogo at sundry times; but the fatigue of returning home by Saturday night to take care of the churches more particularly under my care, and the great difficulty of traveling into so remote a part of the country with several inconveniences too tedious to be mentioned, threw me into a very ill state of health. My physicians were of the opinion that a sudden change of air would be absolutely necessary for me, especially to one of the leeward islands; and if I found no benefit there, to return to England, which I resolved upon rather than run the hazard of my life by staying. And as it has always been my greatest ambition to have my conduct approved of by the Honorable Society, I hope they are too indulgent to be displeased at a fault (if it be such) not in my power to prevent without imminent danger. I had no sooner arrived at the Barbadoes than I found great benefit by the change of air. Soon after, the rectory of St. Lucy's parish became vacant, which by the earnest request of the Rev. Mr. Commissary Johnson, I was prevailed upon to accept. I enjoyed it for near three months and then obtained a license from the Honorable James Dottin, Esq., our commander-in-chief, to return to Pennsylvania for four months, where I now officiate at Radnor and Perkiomen, at the expiration of which time I design, with the Honorable Society's [permission], to return to Barbadoes, and

then beg leave to resign my mission, praying that the Honorable Society will be pleased to supply it [the mission] with another [missionary] as soon as possible. Whether my diligence to assist at several other places, besides my churches at Radnor and Perkiomen, will in the least entitle me to that part of my salary due in my absence, must be left to the generosity of the Honorable Society. I hope I can say without vanity, that whilst I continue in the Province [Pennsylvania] I have discharged my duty to the utmost of my power, and I believe to the general satisfaction of all under my care. To make my unavoidable absence the more easy to them, sometime in the fall, before I went to Barbadoes, I was at a very great expense in publishing a Welsh pamphlet, upon death, judgment, heaven and hell, and have distributed near 150 copies gratis among the poorer sort. Upon my arrival at Pennsylvania, I received from Mr. Commissary Cummings the favor of the Honorable Society's two letters, with the books as specified; and must humbly beg leave to put the Honorable Society in mind that some time ago they were pleased to supply us gratis with a very considerable number of such small tracts, which render these almost entirely needless. The Welsh books which we so much wanted here, are some small compendiums of Divinity, such as the 'Practice of Piety,' the 'Whole Duty of Man,' the Rev. Mr. Prichard's 'Divine Poems' and Common Prayer Books. The Bibles, which the Honorable Society were pleased to send shall be distributed, according to directions. In hopes of being favored with an answer, I remain, with all due respect, the Honorable Society's most obedient and most humble servant,

"Griffith Hughes."

The Rev. William Currie, who succeeded Mr. Hughes at Radnor, in a letter dated May 23rd, 1739, wrote to the secretary: "I preach to a congregation at Canastogoe, about thirty-five miles from this place where I live. There and on my way thither, I have baptized, since my arrival here, above forty infants and some adults."

On December 23rd, 1748, the congregation of Bangor church addressed a communication to The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, as follows:

"To The Honorable Society for Propagating the Gospel in

**Foreign Parts: The Petition of the Congregation of Bangor Church in the township of Caernarvon in the County of Lancaster in Pennsylvania, Humbly Sheweth:**

"Whereas your petitioners have been at the expense of building the said church, soon after the arrival of the Rev. Mr. Hughes, missionary for Radnor and Perkiomen, and since his departure we have had but small supplies until the arrival of the Rev. Mr. Locke [missionary stationed at Lancaster borough] who hath been very diligent every other Sunday for the most part in ministering unto us the means of salvation, but he being dissatisfied to live in this Province, hath immediately upon the cessation of arms, left us quite destitute of any relief or any hopes thereof at present, and there being another church built at Pequea, which is about eight miles distant from ours, and is in the same deplorable condition, and as your immense charity hath extended through most of His Majesty's colonies in America towards the salvation of souls, we, therefore, relying upon your goodness which hath so amply abounded, humbly pray that your Venerable Board would be pleased to consider the distressed and doleful condition of our congregations as being destitute of the means of salvation, and out of your great benignity send a missionary to officiate alternately between our church and Pequea, which said churches are convenient to one another and may be served without any great difficulty, and we assure you that we shall not be wanting in contributing towards his support to the utmost of our power.

"Would the Honorable Society be pleased to grant our petition and supply our church with a Bible<sup>12</sup> and Common Prayer Book, we shall be very thankful, and as in duty bound for you ever pray, etc.

"10ber 23rd 1748." [The Library of Congress interprets this to be December 23rd, 1748.]

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<sup>12</sup> Ten years later, Bangor church purchased a large folio Bible, which is still preserved in the sacristy of the church. The title page bears the date MDCCLI (1751). On the fly leaf is written:

"This Bible Belongs to Banger Church Bought by James Turbett in Philadelphia Price £4, 7s, 6d, With one Year's Collections at said Church. Collected by Neathan Evans & said James Turbett, Church Wardens, May 25, 1758."

On the fly leaf also appears the receipt:

"Philadelphia, May 25, 1758. Received of Mr. James Turbett, the sum of Four pounds Seven Shillings and Six Pence in full for a folio Bible.

"Wm. Bradford."

“Gabriel Davies, David Jones, Jacob Morgan, Wm. Thomas, David Davies, John Goheen, John Ford, Ruth Morgan, Anne Evans, Robert Ellis, Francis Morgan, James Evans, Edward Davies, Edward Hughes, Evan Bowen, Myrick Davies, John Martin, George Adams, Wm. Morris, Hugh Davies, Morris Morris, John Edwards, Zacheus Davies, John Curry, Edward Davies, Jun., John Evans, Nathan Evans, Charles Hudson, Evan Evans, John Davies, Evan Hughes and Nathan Evans, Jun.

“If the Honorable Society be pleased to grant our petition and send us a missionary, we promise to pay annually towards his support the several sums annexed to our names :

|                     |   |    |   |                    |     |    |   |
|---------------------|---|----|---|--------------------|-----|----|---|
|                     | £ | s  | d | John Martin        | 0   | 5  | 0 |
| “Gabriel Davies     | 1 | 5  | 0 | George Adams       | 1   | 0  | 0 |
| David Davies        | 1 | 5  | 0 | William Morris     | 0   | 15 | 0 |
| Jacob Morgan        | 1 | 5  | 0 | Hugh Davies        | 0   | 15 | 0 |
| William Thomas      | 1 | 5  | 0 | Morris Morris      | 0   | 5  | 0 |
| David Jones         | 1 | 5  | 0 | John Edwards       | 1   | 0  | 0 |
| John Goheen         | 1 | 5  | 0 | Zacheus Davies     | 0   | 10 | 0 |
| John Ford           | 1 | 5  | 0 | John Curry         | 0   | 10 | 0 |
| Ruth Morgan         | 1 | 0  | 0 | John Evans         | 1   | 5  | 0 |
| Anne Evans          | 1 | 0  | 0 | Nathan Evans       | 1   | 0  | 0 |
| Robert Ellis        | 1 | 5  | 0 | Evan Evans         | 1   | 0  | 0 |
| Francis Morgan      | 1 | 5  | 0 | John Davies        | 1   | 5  | 0 |
| James Evans         | 0 | 10 | 0 | Evan Hughes        | 1   | 0  | 0 |
| Edward Davies, Jun. | 0 | 10 | 0 | Nathan Evans, Jun. | 0   | 10 | 0 |
| Edward Hughes       | 0 | 10 | 0 |                    | —   | —  | — |
| Evan Bowen          | 0 | 10 | 0 |                    | £26 | 5  | 0 |

While the petition is dated December 23rd, 1748, according to the endorsement on the back of the original, it was not presented to the committee until November 13th, 1749. What action was taken by the committee appointed by the Society to determine matters of this kind, is not known.

### THE MISSION AT PEQUEA

About eight miles to the south of Churchtown, across the Welsh mountains at a place called Pequea, another congregation of the Church of England was established at an early date.

The Rev. Richard Backhouse, missionary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, stationed at Ches-

ter, officiated at Pequea for the first time on February 4th, 1728.<sup>13</sup> In a letter dated Chester, March 12th, 1728, addressed to the secretary of the Society, he wrote, in part, as follows:

"About thirty-six miles back from Chester, on the road to Conostogoe, the inhabitants are building a church, at which, at their request, I design, God willing, to preach once a month. But I shall be there about the middle of the week, and not be absent from the other churches under my care on the Sunday."

The place, "about thirty-six miles back from Chester," where the people were "building a church," was Pequea. Whether it was thirty-six miles from Chester depended upon the route or trail the missionary traveled in order to reach it. Distances, as given in the letters of the missionaries, are not always accurate; for the most part, they estimated the miles from mission to mission.

Under date of May 14th, 1730, Mr. Backhouse wrote to the secretary, as follows:

"I take this opportunity to acquaint you with the state of the churches under my care, which, God be praised! are in a very flourishing condition. . . As for myself, I've been very much afflicted with sickness, which I thought was brought upon me chiefly through

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<sup>13</sup> In a letter dated March 15th, 1736, Mr. Backhouse stated that it was eight years on the 4th of February of that year since he began his ministrations at Pequea. This would fix the date of his first service there on February 4th, 1728.

In a history of St. John's church, Pequea, published in 1929, the author, R. Chester Ross, quotes from the ancient minute book of the parish, which is, in part, as follows:

"We, therefore, according to our small abilities did erect in the year of our Lord, 1729, a wooden frame church of about 22 feet long and 20 feet broad upon a plot of ground containing about one acre."

It will be noted that the record, as quoted by Mr. Ross, states that the church was erected in 1729, whereas the missionary, the Rev. Richard Backhouse, who was instrumental in organizing the congregation, in a letter to the secretary of the S. P. G., dated March 12th, 1728, wrote that "the inhabitants are building a church."

The late B. F. Owen in a paper entitled, "Tradition vs. Fact—Bangor Church," published in Vol. VII, pp. 49-65, of the Proceedings of The Lancaster County Historical Society, states that the information was entered in the minute book of St. John's church by the Rev. George Craig. Since Mr. Craig did not begin his ministrations at Pequea until 1751, more than twenty years after the organization of the congregation, the date which he entered in the record of the parish is, obviously, not correct. It seems reasonably certain that Mr. Backhouse would not have informed the secretary of the S. P. G., in the spring of 1728, that the congregation at Pequea were building a church if they had not at that time been engaged in the laudable undertaking.

the multiplicity of business, my congregations lying so wide, which is the greatest fatigue in life, besides being even compelled by the frequent and earnest solicitations of a people towards Conostogoe. I preach forty miles back one Tuesday in every four weeks, where I've really a large congregation, and above forty communicants. Last summer we had so great an importation of people from Ireland that eight or ten thousand souls were said to have landed in this Province; some thousands of which are settled back in and about Conostogoe, which makes the congregation to which I preach there very numerous."

This, of course, refers to the church at Pequea, which is still in existence, and is known as St. John's Protestant Episcopal church, Compassville. The church building and graveyard are in Chester county, the line separating the two counties passes a few yards west of the church building; but the church, for generations, has been attended by so many people of Lancaster county that its history has always been looked upon as belonging to this county.

In the autumn of 1732, the members of the Church of England, "inhabitants of Pequea and parts adjacent," dispatched the following "humble address" to The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts:

"St. John's Church, Pequay, Oct. 2, 1732.

"Very Venerable Gentlemen:

"A poor, unhappy people, settled, by God's providence, to procure by laborious industry a subsistence for our families, make bold to apply ourselves to God, through that very pious and charitable Society, His happy instruments to disperse His blessings in these remote parts. That as His goodness has vouchsafed us a moderate support for our bodies, His Holy Spirit may influence you to provide us with spiritual food for our souls. In this case, our indigence is excessive and our destitution deplorable, having never been so blessed as to have a person settled among us to dispense the august ordinances of religion, insomuch that even the name of it is almost lost among us. The virtue and energy of it over our lives expiring, especially since your worthy missionary,

Mr. Richard Backhouse, is deceased,<sup>14</sup> who spared no labor in visiting and coming once a month, on a week day, to administer divine service among us at St. John's church at Pequea, though he lived fifty miles distant from us. As we are now left destitute and live far distant from any of the Established churches where the missionaries are appointed to officiate, we are exposed to the temptations of joining with dissenters who are very numerous, and are constantly supplied with ministers of their sort, who are very industrious to draw away the hearts of many well inclined members of the Church for want of opportunities of worship more agreeable to their consciences. Insomuch that we may cry out, with holy David, 'We are become a by-word among the heathen and a shaking of the head among the people;' that, further, we (of St. John's church) had not been humbly bold to address you in this nature, except we had first made some preparation, for the proper reception of a missionary, having by the assistance of our pious and beloved sister and church member, Martha Byzallion, [spelled Bezellon on her tombstone] purchased a hundred acres for a glebe land, and she has given us £100 in cash towards the said purchase, by which means, we have obtained a patent for our church uses, together with some further expectations of her kindness provided we be so fortunate and happy as to be heard by your honorable board."

On November 7th, 1732, Mr. Backhouse wrote to the secretary:

"At the church, forty miles back, where I preach once every four weeks, the congregation is great; and I have baptized there, in one year, above fifty children."

Under date of October 1st, 1733, Mr. Backhouse wrote as follows:

"That journey, forty miles back once a month, to the church of Pequea is almost too hard for my constitution; and all who are acquainted with the length and roughness of the way cannot but be surprised that I have been able to perform the journey in all weathers so duly and regularly as I have done. But, indeed, the congregations are so very earnest and importunate, I cannot evade

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<sup>14</sup> This statement is incorrect and was based on a false rumor. Mr. Backhouse died November 19th, 1749. See "Historical Collections of the American Colonial Church" p. 259.



visiting them in my usual method and as I first engaged. There, lately, at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper I had forty-five communicants; and many that used constantly to attend were hindered by the wetness of the season.

"I am persuaded were the Society able and willing to settle a missionary there he would find a good living in that and some other adjacent congregations in Lancaster county."

In a letter, dated Chester, Pennsylvania, October 30th, 1734, Mr. Backhouse wrote, in part, as follows:

"I need not excuse myself for not giving you a more frequent account of my mission here than hitherto I have done, because things are running in the old and good channel. I have nothing strange to acquaint you with. I have enjoyed health (blessed be God!) pretty well this year past, and have duly performed once every four weeks my journey forty miles back to Pequea."

In a letter, dated Chester, March 15th, 1736, Mr. Backhouse described the state of his mission at Pequea, as follows:

"It is eight years, the 4th of February last, since I began to collect the scattered remains of a congregation of Church people at Pequea, and neither the excessive heat and cold, in summer or winter, nor the great expenses of that journey, have hindered me from visiting them once every twenty-eight days, and yet the church we have there erected is forty computed miles from Chester. Often I am obliged, either going or coming, to go out of my way to baptize children, visit the sick, etc., so that I can scarce ever compute it to be less than a journey of one hundred miles. I often baptize eight or ten children in the church at once, besides those at private houses, considerably; and when I administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (which I usually do thrice a year) there are never fewer than betwixt forty and fifty communicants. The members of that congregation are worthy of the Honorable Society's notice and respect, as being well inclined and sincerely zealous to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. But many of them being new settlers, having on their hands that expensive work of clearing plantations from the rough woods, have never as yet been able even to bear my expenses in traveling to and among them."

The secretary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, desired to know the number of inhabitants who

were members of the Church of England in the missions supplied by the Rev. Mr. Backhouse. In a letter, dated December 9th, 1738, the missionary informed him that he was unable to give him a correct account. He did state, however, that "the dissenters back at Pequea are generally Presbyterians."

"As for that one church at Pequea," he wrote, "which I visit but once every four weeks, and that, generally, on a Tuesday, it flourishes as much as can be expected. When I administer the sacrament there, never less than near fifty, sometimes many more receive [it]. I've baptized there forty-four infants this last half-year, and one adult person, — a young man converted from Quakerism."

In a letter, dated August 23rd, 1740, Mr. Backhouse informed the secretary:

"I have no more occasion to visit that congregation forty miles back, at Pequea, they having got a clergyman from Ireland, one Mr. Blackall, to reside among them, which is a great blessing to the people, if rightly made use of, and an inexpressible ease and satisfaction to me."

On July 25th, 1741, Mr. Backhouse wrote, as follows:

"About a month ago, at Mr. Blackall's request, I went forty miles back to my old congregation at Pequea, a people I had gathered from among almost all manner of sects and countries, a congregation I duly attended once a month, even in the most rigorous weather, both winter and summer, for full eleven years; some of whom were of late grown giddy-brain'd with Whitefield's preaching and some of his brethren, the Presbyterian itinerants, refusing to go to church; but those with whom I conversed, I left fully satisfied, promising to return to their duty, and not to be drawn aside or deluded any longer by those bold and ranting enthusiasts."

On June 14th, 1742, Mr. Backhouse wrote to the secretary:

"This Province is now becoming exceedingly populous, and there are many large congregations of Church people who being quite destitute of Church of England ministers are to their great grief obliged to herd among the Presbyterians. And were the Society able to open a new mission, I am sure no place can want [one] more than the town of Lancaster, and the church at Pequea.

And though there are many large congregations besides those, a clergyman settled back there might in some measure supply them on a working day of the week as I used to serve Pequea. . . In Lancaster county, besides all the different sects of Dutch, which are very numerous, there are twelve settled Presbyterian teachers."

In a letter, dated Chester, May 28th, 1743, Mr. Backhouse wrote, as follows:

"This comes to acquaint you that all the congregations that are and have lately been under my care, are in a flourishing state and thriving circumstances. But, alas! my old congregation at Pequea, which during my officiating among them on a Tuesday every four weeks, was the largest country congregation in Pennsylvania, and which, when first I went among them, was the least of all others, is now reduced to its primitive smallness. What is the cause? I shall not say positively, but some are forward enough to lay it to the charge of the Rev. Mr. John Blackall, whose imprudent behavior and bad conduct, have driven some to the dissenters, and so far disgusted others that they refuse to go to church. That gentleman came not by the way of London but directly from Londonderry into America to seek some preferment. And arriving at Philadelphia, he met with some of the Pequea congregation, who knew him in Ireland and his stock of people. I directly was applied to, to give my consent, that he should go and reside amongst them, and alternately officiate on the Sundays with them and a Welsh congregation, seven or eight miles distant. I was highly pleased with the thing because that journey of forty miles back, which for near twelve years, at the appointed times, I carefully performed, even in the most rigorous seasons, both of heat and cold, wet and dry, very much impaired my health and constitution. Accordingly, he went among them; and their management with one another has brought their church affairs into a bad condition. He has now entirely left them, which made me go to pay them a visit, from which journey I got home last night; and at their earnest request, I have given them some hopes of coming among them every fourth Tuesday, as I used formerly to do. I fear at this time a day with me, the undertaking will be too great and difficult, and what no missionary I know, whether settled or itinerant, would engage himself in. But as I first was an

instrument in the hands of God to gather so large a congregation from so small a beginning, and in such a part where religion was almost forgotten; and as they have built a pretty church, and have fifty pounds in ready cash, which I procured them from a charitable gentlewoman towards purchasing a glebe land, I have it at heart to use my utmost endeavors to re-settle and gather them together again."

The Rev. Robert Jenney, rector of Christ church, Philadelphia, 1742-1762, who had succeeded the Rev. Mr. Cummings as commissary for Pennsylvania, wrote a letter dated, "Philadelphia, October 4th, 1743," addressed to the Lord Bishop of London, in which he informed his lordship that he had called a meeting of the clergy in the Province, to be held September 7th of that year. There were two clergymen who represented themselves as of the Church of England, officiating in the Province, who were not sent by The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and who did not have a license. One was the Rev. John Blackall. The commissary invited them to be present at the meeting of the clergy in Philadelphia. Mr. Blackall did not attend the meeting but sent a letter requesting to be excused. The commissary asked for specific instructions concerning Mr. Blackall as he was officiating without a license and his behavior was not regular.

On November 22nd, 1743, Mr. Backhouse wrote to the secretary:

"In my last letter I gave you a melancholy account of my congregation at Pequea, but, blessed be God! the tables are now quite turned, for after I had assured them I would attend them as formerly I had done, they that had left the church returned with a surprising joy, and when I go among them every fourth Tuesday I never fail of having a crowded audience.

"The gentlewoman who gave them fifty pounds towards purchasing a glebe land, has promised fifty more, since now I visit them. And if the Society could find themselves able and willing to open a mission there, a missionary might officiate at Pequea church, at Lancaster town, and the congregations adjacent; and if a discreet man (for it depends upon that) were fixed there, he might be of great service to the cause of Jesus Christ, and have as comfortable a subsistence as any missionary in Penn's govern-

ment. Mr. Blackall departed this life at Lancaster town, I think, the twelfth day of October last.<sup>15</sup> A gentleman well educated, but through some human frailties and infirmities he became partly useless to the Church in this part of the world."

In a letter, dated April 17th, 1744, the Rev. Dr. Philip Bearcroft, secretary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, wrote to the Rev. Mr. Backhouse, as follows:

"Pray thank that good gentlewoman in the name of the Society who hath already given fifty pounds and proposes to give more towards purchasing a glebe for the church at Pequea. May God reward her fourfold!"

In a letter, dated September 21st, 1744, Mr. Backhouse wrote:

"I continue my journey to Pequea, as I used to do before Mr. Blackall settled among them, once every four weeks, where even in the winter seasons I never fail of having a large congregation."

In a letter, dated Chester, April 16th, 1745, Mr. Backhouse wrote:

"I go once a month to Pequea, and although the Rev. Mr. Richard Locke [stationed at Lancaster] (who came from Bermudas to this Province) offered to officiate at their church once every other Sunday, yet the people are so stupidly silly they refused to receive him, declaring publicly to all people they would be well pleased with me once a month on a Tuesday, except when I could favor them with a Sunday (which I endeavor to do two or three times a year) until the Bishop of London and the Society would be pleased to take their case into consideration."

On November 15th, 1745, Mr. Backhouse wrote a letter to the secretary, in which he stated:

"The night before last, being Wednesday, I returned from my congregation at Pequea, and though that journey is exceedingly fatiguing, yet I am still refreshed in seeing them so regular, so zealous and well-inclined a people. They have now purchased fifty acres of land for a glebe charmingly situated, where there are some improvements, as two or three fields of cleared ground, and a small log house, before the door of which is as beautiful a spring as perhaps is to be met with anywhere in the country, the

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<sup>15</sup> According to the records in the Office of the Register of Wills, Lancaster county, Pa., Mr. Blackall died intestate.

current thereof supplying a neighboring over-shot mill with water, which is built about a quarter of a mile below the spring. But as fifty acres is here looked upon as being too little for a plantation, there lies contiguous a tract of fifty acres more, which the congregation intends to purchase, if the Society will be pleased to send a missionary for the three churches of Pequea, Caernarvon and Lancaster town. And though the congregations of Lancaster and Caernarvon have petitioned the Society, and the congregation at Pequea have not, yet they have requested of me to let the Society know the reason, which is this, viz: The congregation at Pequea had drawn a petition by and with the advice and consent of Commissary Jenney and the rest of the clergy at the visitation, which petition they communicated to Mr. Thomas Cookson of Lancaster, prothonotary; he requesting the favor of the people at Pequea so to do, that they might, like brethren, join in the request, which they readily agreed to; but (behold the sincerity, shall I say, or the artifice, of some men!) he kept their petition and privately posted away one for the Church people living in and about Lancaster town (as I stand informed) when they had neither church, glebe, nor any provisions made for the reception of a clergymen. . . And if the Society find themselves able and willing to settle a missionary among these congregations, it is my humble opinion that it will be a piece of prudence to fix him at Pequea, where he will meet with a kind people who have already made the provisions aforementioned, and (I will be bound for them) will purchase fifty acres of land more towards a glebe, upon finding a missionary settled among them.

“I am acquainted with the chiefs of the people of the three congregations and think myself as capable (without vanity) to acquaint the Society with the circumstances of their Church affairs, as any clergyman in Pennsylvania.”

On April 23rd, 1746, Mr. Backhouse wrote to the secretary: “In my last I acquainted you that my congregation at Pequea had purchased fifty acres of land for a glebe which was commodiously situated; and I now can inform you that their good friend and gentlewoman I have heretofore mentioned in my letters to you who gave them fifty pounds before towards the purchase of that, has now promised to pay into my hands about the middle of the

next month fifty pounds more to go towards the purchase of fifty acres lying contiguous to the fifty aforesaid. Her name is Martha Byzallion, whose character deserves to be recorded, but yet it pleased Providence, weak as I am, to bring that woman into the Church and to contribute so generously to the church at Pequea. I baptized her when above forty years old. She is a sober, pious, Christian, and zealous for our Church. It is not her only but some others that I've been instrumental to incite to charity towards my churches, and I beg you'll not think it sounding my own praise (because I must give you an account of things) when I tell you that I have not labored only in the Word and in the doctrine, but also in promoting the temporal interest of the Church.

"However, please not to mention this charitable gift of Mrs. Martha Byzallion's in the printed accounts, for this reason, viz: She has no children of her own, but she has an own sister in Philadelphia, a Quaker, who has children, whose husband and herself, are angry with me, thinking I influence this gentlewoman to give something to the Church (but yet they know not what); and should they find in the printed accounts what it is, both she and I would be mob'd by them, for they expect all that she has, when she dies, which is very considerable, and yet they grudge her the enjoyment of it during her life."

About a year later, under date of May 20th, 1747, Mr. Backhouse wrote to the Rev. Dr. Bearcroft as follows:

"The small quantity of Church people about Lancaster town buoy themselves up with an expectation that the Society will open a mission there to the exclusion of Pequea; but if you'll believe me, the congregation at Pequea, in case I were to be there on a Sunday, exceeds the congregation of Lancaster in a great proportion."

Under date of June 26th, 1748, Mr. Backhouse informed the secretary:

"Last winter the weather and roads were so bad that for four months (not being, indeed, able to perform the journey) I did not visit the church at Pequea; but as soon as the spring dawned, I went the first time on a Sunday, and have continued every fourth Tuesday to visit them. A prudent gentleman settled among them, with charge to attend also, by turns, some adjacent churches,

would be of great service to the glorious cause the Honorable Society is embarked in."

On October 26th, 1748, he sent a letter to the secretary in which he stated that he had intended returning to England on a visit in the spring of the next year, for the purpose of collecting £100 sterling in Lancashire, England. He had hoped to give him a more particular account of his missions in person. Several of his brethren of the clergy, promised to officiate for him during his absence. He also stated that he visited his congregation at Pequea, as usual, and always had an increase of numbers there.

On June 25th, 1749, Mr. Backhouse wrote to the secretary:

"In my last letter dated October 26th, 1748, I gave you an account of my intentions of embarking for England in the spring; but some accounts from England about my affairs there, and the necessary and increasing care of the churches here, have so given me a respite on the one hand, and so engaged me on the other, that I cannot think, till the fall, of my voyage. . .

"Our good friend, Mrs. Martha Byzallion,<sup>16</sup> has given the congregation at Pequea fifty pounds more, in order to buy fifty acres more land, contiguous to the fifty she had purchased for them before. The land, in one day more, they would have lost, had it not been for her having her money by her, and as much more to lend them, as made up the purchase,—the fifty acres costing eighty pounds; so that now they have a hundred acres of fine land for a glebe to the church at Pequea. The congregation there is a flourishing one. I want not to magnify things, because I officiate among them, but about two months ago I in that church baptized eleven children. That day, four weeks after (about a week ago), I administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to very near fifty persons, and after that I baptized fifteen children and churched thirteen women."

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<sup>16</sup> This estimable woman is buried in the old churchyard adjoining St. John's Protestant Episcopal church, Compassville. On her tombstone, surmounted by a winged cherub which the late W. U. Hensel considered one of the finest examples of the sculptor's art in this county, appears the following inscription: "Here lieth the Body / of / Martha Bezellon, / Relict of Peter Bezellon: / She departed this Life / June 18, A.D. 1764. / Aged 71 years."

Mrs. Bezellon's husband, Peter Bezellon, noted Indian trader, is buried by her side. His tombstone is surmounted with a skull and cross bones, and on it is inscribed the following: "In / Memory of / Peter Bezellon / who departed this life / July the 18th, 1742. / Aged 80 years."



It will be noted that in the "humble address" which the members of St. John's church, Pequea, sent on October 2nd, 1732, to The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, asking that they be supplied with a missionary, it is stated that for his reception the congregation had purchased a hundred acres for a glebe; and that Mrs. Martha Bezellon, a devoted member of the Church, had given £100 in cash towards the purchase. A patent for the land was obtained for the use of the church.

In view of the subsequent correspondence which passed between the missionary at Pequea and the secretary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts it is doubtful whether the glebe was actually purchased and whether Mrs. Bezellon had actually paid the £100 as stated in the "humble address." Ten and a half years later, the Rev. Richard Backhouse wrote that the congregation at Pequea had £50 in ready cash towards the purchase of a glebe. The money was procured "from a charitable gentlewoman," Mrs. Bezellon. If Mr. Backhouse is correct in his statement, then the mission at Pequea was without a glebe in 1743. Two years later, the land was actually purchased. Mr. Backhouse informed the secretary that the congregation at Pequea had purchased fifty acres of land, charmingly situated. As fifty acres were considered too small for a plantation, there was next to it a tract of fifty acres which the congregation purchased about 1748 or 1749 for £80. Mrs. Bezellon contributed another £50 bringing the sum total of her contribution for this purpose up to £100.

The Rev. Richard Backhouse died on November 19th, 1749, after serving for twenty-one years, in a field that often presented many difficulties.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> In a letter to the secretary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, dated Chester, December 4th, 1749, Mrs. Backhouse wrote as follows:

"Give me leave to acquaint you that I am the sorrowful widow of Richard Backhouse, late missionary at Chester, in Pennsylvania. He departed this life the 19th day of November last, having first obtained a good report by his long and painful labors in his Master's vineyard among all sorts and degrees of people. Besides three different cures, he served a congregation at Pequea once a month for several years; and many difficulties and inconveniences he struggled with in a long and tedious journey, (it being four score miles in going and returning) gradually impaired his health and brought him to finish his course at an age wherein he might have a prospect of much longer continuance.

## THE MISSION AT LANCASTER

It is not known definitely when missionaries of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts first visited the site of Lancaster city. We do know, however, that the Rev. Robert Weyman, who was stationed at Oxford, and supplied Radnor, did not visit this region in 1717-18, and very likely not in 1719, as stated in several local histories previously referred to, because he did not arrive in America until November 26th of the latter year.<sup>18</sup> In a letter to the secretary dated Oxford, Pennsylvania, October 1st, 1726, Mr. Weyman informed him that the harvest was great but the laborers few. The lack of missionaries in the Province induced him to quicken his efforts in the interest of the Church. He served in the capacity of a volunteer itinerant missionary; and, when he could be spared from his congregations at Oxford and Radnor, he visited, on week days, the outlying settlements for the purpose of spreading the Christian religion and administering the sacrament of baptism to believers and their children. In his efforts to propagate the faith he traveled often, he states, to Conestoga, which he estimated to be more than forty miles beyond Radnor, and Radnor was twenty miles from Oxford, where he resided.

In 1712 the region that is now known as Lancaster county was erected into the township of Conestoga, then a part of Chester county. The new township took its name from its chief stream, the Conestoga river.<sup>19</sup> Among the Indian tribes who dwelt in the primitive forests of Lancaster county, were the Susquehannocks. Racially, they belonged to the Iroquois, but had allied themselves with the Algonquins and were constantly at war with the Iroquois confederacy. At the time of William Penn's arrival,

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Thus having spent the flower of his days in the faithful discharge of the great trust reposed in him, will justify, I hope, my humble address to the Honorable Society for their kind regards to me, who leaving England, my native country, and crossing the seas with him, am left now in a strange land, without any other dependances save my trust in God and the generosity of my husband's former patrons and benefactors."

<sup>18</sup> In a letter to the secretary dated June 26th, 1720, Mr. Weyman stated: "I arrived ye 26th of November, 1719, in these parts."

<sup>19</sup> "Pennsylvania Place Names," by A. Howry Espenshade, 1925, p. 41.

the English referred to them as Susquehannocks; Penn's subjects, however, called them Conestogas.<sup>20</sup>

The place called "Conestoga," which Mr. Weyman visited, and which he stated was a distance of "more than forty miles beyond Radnor," was, in all probability, somewhere in the vicinity of the present Lancaster city, if not on the actual site. The site of Lancaster was, at an early date, an important trading center for the Indians.

The first permanent settlement of white men in Lancaster county was in the vicinity of Lampeter, in 1710.<sup>21</sup> Others followed in rapid succession, and it was not long until the nucleus of a hamlet was established on the present site of Lancaster city. The original settlers were squatters. By this term is meant that they had not secured titles to the land which they occupied, having simply taken possession of it for their own use. By 1726, the year Mr. Weyman wrote the letter in which he stated that he had often traveled to Conestoga, there must have been a village of no inconsiderable size on the site. Undoubtedly many of the seventy-eight children which he stated he baptized during that year, lived in this general neighborhood. He also stated that he had subjected himself to considerable expense and had endured great fatigue in undertaking the journeys.

While in London, in the summer of 1728, Mr. Weyman who had returned to England to visit his aged parents, addressed a communication to The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in which he described conditions in the Province of Pennsylvania. He stated that the paucity of ministers had induced him to extend his labors far beyond the boundaries of his mission, and that he was obliged to travel from place to place to keep the people steadfast in the faith and to dispense the Word and sacraments to them, even as far back as Conestoga, which was seventy miles from his place of residence. This, also referred to the then small village on the site of Lancaster city or else it was in the immediate vicinity.

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<sup>20</sup> "Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, A History," by H. M. J. Klein, 1924, Vol. 1, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> Vol. XIV, pp. 21-71, Proceedings of The Lancaster County Historical Society.

On March 12th, 1728, the Rev. Richard Backhouse, the Society's missionary at Chester, wrote to the secretary that he "had been once back in the country seventy miles, at one part of Conestoga, near the place where Mr. Weyman used to go." He stayed four days with them and preached twice.

It will be noted in the above letter, that Mr. Backhouse stated he visited "*one part of Conestoga*, near the place where Mr. Weyman used to go." It has been definitely ascertained that Churchtown was referred to as "Canistogue" as early as 1728, the year in which the Rev. Jonas Lidman, a Swedish missionary, officiated at Churchtown. In a certificate, signed by George Hudson, Gabriel Davies, Edward Thomas, Philip David, John Davies, John Howell and Hugh David, it is stated that the Rev. Mr. Lidman preached at "Canistogue" on August 28th and 29th, 1728. It is also stated in the certificate that "Canistogue" was a place "scituate about forty-five miles from Philadelphia." Churchtown is about forty-five miles from Philadelphia; and persons acquainted with the nomenclature of this region know that the names on the document represent the hardy Welsh pioneers who settled in Caernarvon township, Lancaster county, Pa., and attended Bangor Protestant Episcopal church, Churchtown. The "one part of Conestoga," which Mr. Backhouse visited, and which he stated was "back in the country seventy miles" from Chester, the place of his residence, was, in all probability, the then small village on the site of Lancaster city or in the immediate vicinity. The distance from Chester to Lancaster, as given by Mr. Backhouse, was a fairly good estimate for those days, at least, since it depended on the road or trail the missionary traveled in order to reach his destination. As the word "Conestoga" was used by Mr. Weyman, who lived at Oxford, and by Mr. Backhouse, who lived at Chester, much importance is attached to the distances, as given in their letters, in order to determine the places of their early ministrations in this region.

As previously stated in this article, Churchtown, as early as 1728 was known as Conestoga, and for a number of years thereafter was referred to, by the missionaries, at least, by that name. It is reasonably certain, that prior to the erection of Lancaster county in 1729, the settlement on the site of Lancaster city was

also referred to by the missionaries as Conestoga, if any dependence can be placed on the distances as given in their letters. Seventy miles beyond Chester would have taken Mr. Backhouse far beyond Churchtown; and above forty miles beyond Radnor is farther than the distance from St. David's church, Radnor, to Bangor church, Churchtown. We do know, for a certainty, that there was an organized congregation at Churchtown in 1728, which was forty-five miles from Philadelphia; and Mr. Backhouse began his ministrations at Pequea in the same year, which, as stated so frequently in his letters, was forty miles back from Chester. We also know that Mr. Weyman officiated at a place which he called Conestoga, forty miles beyond Radnor, and Mr. Backhouse officiated "at one part of Conestoga, near the place where Mr. Weyman used to go, which was seventy miles from Chester." From this it will be seen that somewhere in Lancaster county, in addition to Churchtown and Pequea, there was an embryo congregation which the missionaries visited, and to which they referred as Conestoga. If it was not on the site of Lancaster city, then where was it?

On October 1st, 1733, Mr. Backhouse wrote a letter to the secretary informing him that if the Society were able and willing to settle a missionary at Pequea, he would find a good living in that mission and in the other congregations in Lancaster county. He stated that there was a large number of English, Irish, Welsh and Dutch living in the county who had a just value for the Church of England and earnestly desired a teacher of that communion.

On November 7th, 1734, the Rev. Archibald Cummings, commissary of the Lord Bishop of London, wrote a letter to the secretary, in which he stated that the bearer, the Rev. William Lindsay, came to America about sixteen months ago, very well recommended. He was a Master of Arts and had studied philosophy and divinity in the College of Glasgow. As he considered him to be very well qualified, he recommended him to the Bishop of London for holy orders. Mr. Lindsay returned to England and met the committee on February 21st, 1735. He received the appointment as the Society's itinerant missionary for Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It was agreed that he should reside at Bristol and officiate at Hope-well, Trenton, Amwell, White Clay Creek, London Grove, etc. He

sailed from The Downs on March 14th, 1735, and after a very dangerous passage, with contrary and stormy winds, he arrived in Philadelphia on May 28th, after a voyage of nearly two months and a half. Six months after his arrival, he wrote a letter to the secretary, dated "Bristol, Pennsylvania, November 14th, 1735," in which he described conditions as he found them in his mission. He mentioned the places he had visited but Lancaster was not included. As an itinerant missionary for Pennsylvania, it is logical to assume that he visited Lancaster, and he may have done so.

In Mombert's history, p. 451, it is stated that the Rev. Mr. Lindsay visited Lancaster county about 1735. In Ellis and Evans' history, p. 464, Dr. Knight states that the Rev. *James* Lindsay held services in Lancaster from time to time during the years 1735, '36, '37. This is undoubtedly an error as "William," not "James," was the name of the itinerant missionary during these years. Waters, p. 116, in copying from Knight, made the same error, as Klein did likewise, p. 829. So far as my researches have extended, I have been unable to prove by an authentic record that Mr. Lindsay ever visited Lancaster, although I am inclined to think that he did so. On April 3rd, 1746, the Rev. Richard Locke, who then resided in Lancaster, was appointed by the Society as its itinerant missionary in Pennsylvania and New Jersey to succeed the Rev. William Lindsay who was dismissed from that mission for conduct unbecoming a clergyman. Seven sworn charges were preferred against him, the chief of which was drunkenness.

In the spring of 1740, the Rev. John Blackall, a clergyman of the Church of England, emigrated from Londonderry to America. When he arrived in Philadelphia he met some of his former countrymen, members of the congregation at Pequea. They prevailed upon him to accept the rectorship of St. John's church, Pequea, and also to serve the congregation of Bangor church, Churchtown. Mr. Blackall was not sent to America as the representative of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, but came here on his own initiative, presumably to better his condition in life. He supplied the two congregations for nearly three years, but owing to imprudent behavior and misconduct, was obliged to resign.

Whether or not Mr. Blackall ever officiated in Lancaster town,

is not known. It is quite possible that he may have done so at frequent intervals during the time he had charge of the church at Pequea, and even after his resignation. His death occurred in Lancaster borough on October 12th, 1743. The place of his burial is not known. As there was no church building nor graveyard of his communion in Lancaster at the time of his death, doubtless he was interred in the burial ground of another denomination.

Mr. Blackall was a gentleman who had been well educated; but owing to human frailties and infirmities he became useless to the Church in the new world. He was a representative of that class of missionaries which the celebrated Whitefield denounced so strongly, stating that they hindered rather than helped the growth of the Church of England in America.<sup>22</sup>

On June 14th, 1742, the Rev. Mr. Backhouse informed the secretary that the population of Pennsylvania was increasing rapidly and many large congregations of the Church of England were without clergymen. Were the Society able to establish a mission, the town of Lancaster was an ideal place for the purpose. A clergyman stationed there might supply the neighboring congregations on week days. "In Lancaster town," he wrote, "there is a [Roman Catholic] priest settled where they have bought some lots and are building a mass house, and another itinerant [Roman Catholic] priest who goes back into the country. This is a just and faithful account which I received last February in Lancaster town from the prothonotary and some of the principal justices of the peace for that county. . . . Mr. Sankey, in Monada [?] township, in the county of Lancaster, aforesaid, being asked how his congregation stood affected in these unsettled times, answered, that he was happy in having his congregation chiefly to consist of Church of England people who gave themselves up to none of those wild notions and enthusiastic ravings that some people practiced so much and were so fond of. So that, I'll assure you, in this Province with relation to our Church the harvest is great and the laborers very few."

Again under date of November 22nd, 1743, Mr. Backhouse counseled the secretary that if the Society were able to station a

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<sup>22</sup> See letter of George Whitefield dated "On board the Savannah, bound from Philadelphia to Georgia, November 30th, 1740."

missionary at Pequea, he might officiate there, and at Lancaster borough and at Churchtown, if a discreet man were appointed for that mission; and he emphasized the fact that all depended upon the qualifications of the missionary; he might be of great service to the cause of Christ and His Church, and have as comfortable a living as any missionary in Pennsylvania.

A great Indian treaty conference was held in Lancaster borough in 1744. This conference was, without exception, the most interesting if not the most important which ever took place within the confines of Pennsylvania. The sessions lasted thirteen days, from June 22nd to July 4th, and were held in the court house in Penn square.<sup>23</sup>

The council was attended by Hon. George Thomas, lieutenant governor of the Province of Pennsylvania, by the commissioners of Maryland and Virginia, by Conrad Weiser, as interpreter, and by deputies of the Onondagas, Senecas, Cayugas, Oneidas and Tuscaroras.

The secretary of the commissioners of the Province of Maryland, Witham Marshe, gives a fine description in his diary of the scenes in Penn square, Lancaster, during the fortnight when the council was in session.<sup>24</sup>

Mr. Marshe stated that "The religions which prevail here [Lancaster] are hardly to be numbered. . . A clergyman of the Church of England sometimes officiates in the court house, there being no church here built by those of that persuasion."

It is regrettable that Mr. Marshe was not more specific. If only he had given us the name of the itinerant clergyman who occasionally officiated in Lancaster!

Mr. Marshe was accompanied on the journey to Lancaster by

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<sup>23</sup> "An Authentic History of Lancaster County," by J. I. Mombert, 1869, Appendix, pp. 51-89.

<sup>24</sup> "Lancaster in 1744. Journal of the Treaty at Lancaster in 1744, With the Six Nations, by Witham Marshe, Secretary of the Maryland Commissioners. Annotated by William H. Egle, M. D., Lancaster, Pa., The New Era Steam Book and Job Print. 1884." The author, in what might be called an introduction, but which is merged with the text, expresses his indebtedness to Prof. A. L. Guss, of Washington City, "who has devoted much time and labor to ethnological research." Dr. Egle also refers to the Fourth Volume of Colonial Records of Pennsylvania, pp. 698-737. See The Daily New Era, Lancaster, Pa., March 21st to April 25th, 1884.



the Rev. Thomas Craddock, a clergyman of the Church of England, and chaplain to the Maryland commissioners.<sup>25</sup>

Under date of Sunday, June 24th, 1744, he made this entry in his diary:

"Mr. Commissioner Jennings ordered me to copy the speech to be read by him, in the name of the Governor of Maryland, to the Indians in the court house, to-morrow evening. This, and transcribing some copies of it, busied me so much that I could not go to the court house when divine service, according to the Church of England, was performed by my fellow-traveler, the Rev. Mr. Craddock, to a numerous audience this day. He also preached a good sermon, which met the approbation of the several gentlemen present.

"His Honor, the governor, invited Mr. Craddock to dine with him, which he did, and received a hearty welcome.

"Betwixt one and two, our honorable commissioners and those of Virginia dined in the court house, and the gentlemen of both their governments; after which the office of the day was again performed by another minister of the Established Church. He gave us an excellent sermon, and expiated very feelingly on the too prevalent vices of the day. He used plain language, and thereby fitted his discourses for all capacities, by which all might truly edify, if they had any grace or good disposition thereto."

It would be interesting if we knew the name of the other clergyman of the Established Church who read the office of Evening Prayer in the court house and preached so well on the sins of the day.

Three months after the treaty was concluded in Lancaster, St. James's parish was organized under the direction of the Rev. Richard Locke, a missionary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, who succeeded the Rev. William Lindsay as itinerant missionary in Pennsylvania.

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<sup>25</sup> The Rev. Thomas Craddock was born at Wolverham, Bedfordshire, England, in 1718. He emigrated to Maryland in 1742. In October of that year, the General Assembly passed an act for the erection of a chapel-of-ease in the north-western part of St. Paul's parish, about twelve miles from Baltimore. It was created an independent parish, known as St. Thomas's, three years later. On February 4th, 1745, the Rev. Mr. Craddock became the rector, and continued as such for twenty-five years. In 1747 he opened a school in his home for young gentlemen, teaching the Latin and Greek languages. The school flourished for a number of years. He was a fine scholar, and in 1753 published a revision of the Psalms. He died May 7th, 1770, in the fifty-second year of his age. Sprague's Annals, Vol. 5, p. 111.