

# THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASTER COUNTY

By WILLIAM FREDERIC WORNER

*(Continued from Vol. XXXVII, Page 97)*

The Rev. Richard Locke, who was active in organizing a congregation of the Church of England in Lancaster borough received, on July 4th, 1743, a bounty of £20 from the King of England.<sup>1</sup> This amount was to defray the cost of his passage to Bermuda, where he had been sent by the Bishop of London, with the understanding that he was to receive a stipend of £100 annually. He states, however, that all he received was £50, and perquisites, which amounted to approximately £60, since the currency in Bermuda at that time was equivalent to about £40 sterling. He wrote:

“They [the Bermudians] have neither bread nor water, only rain water; and we gave five pence per pound for coarse sea biscuits, and every other thing [was as expensive] in proportion. I stayed there eight months and scarce got enough to pay my passage; but by the advice of the governor, I took passage for Charleston, South Carolina, having a letter of encouragement from the secretary there [who was] a former acquaintance [of mine. I also carried] a letter of recommendation from the governor [of Bermuda] to the governor of that Province [South Carolina], but the captain, a villain, carried me to Philadelphia.”<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>“A List of Emigrant Ministers to America 1690-1811,” by Gerald Fothergill, London, 1904.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of the Rev. Richard Locke to the Rev. Dr. Philip Bearcroft, secretary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, dated Trenton, N. J., April 13th, 1747.

Early in the autumn of 1744, Mr. Locke arrived in Lancaster. He was not at that time a missionary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, but was a clergyman of the Church of England, without a cure. Evidently, the place appeared attractive to him, and seemed to offer a fertile field for a mission for the propagation of the faith. He made arrangements for a meeting with the churchmen of the community and its immediate vicinity, and on Wednesday, October 3rd, a congregation of the Church of England was formally organized. The opening entry in the time-stained minute book, preserved by this ancient parish, contains the following illuminating account of the proceedings:

“October 3rd, 1744. The Rev. Mr. Richard Locke, accidentally coming into this our borough of Lancaster, a little before the date hereof, we agreed to give him what encouragement we could for his residence amongst us. And though destitute of any set place of worship for performing the divine service of the Church of England, and its members here [being] but very few, yet in order to keep up and maintain the polity or government of the Church, we have met this day for chusing of Church wardens and vestrymen, [at which time] the following persons were unanimously chosen:

*Church wardens:* Thomas Cookson, Esq., and John Postlethwait.

*Vestrymen:* Edward Smout, Esq., John Foulke, Daniel Syng, Morgan Morgan, William Bristow and John Connolly.”

For a number of years prior to the arrival of Mr. Locke in Lancaster, and for nearly six years after the congregation was formally organized as above, services of the Church of England were held in the court house, which was at that time in the center of Penn Square.

A little more than two months after his arrival in Lancaster, Mr. Locke and a vestryman, John Foulke, a tanner by trade, jointly purchased on December 14th, 1744, an acre of land on Jermyn (now Church) street, for £20, in what was then known as Musser town, but which at the present time is a part of Lancaster city. On January 10th, 1745, the land was divided, each receiving a half acre. Whether Mr. Locke had decided to settle permanently in

Lancaster, or whether he bought the land for speculation, is not now definitely known.<sup>3</sup>

At a meeting held on Easter Monday, April 15th, 1745, it was agreed that the church wardens chosen October 3rd, 1744, when the congregation was formally organized, should continue in office. Patrick Carrigan and Edward Taylor were added to the vestry. Thomas Cookson was appointed to receive subscriptions for the erection of a stone church in the borough of Lancaster, in which building services, according to the constitution of the Church of England, were to be conducted. It is evident that Mr. Locke did not meet with the success in Lancaster he had anticipated. As a clergyman of the Church of England, his living was, no doubt, meager. He had applied, through the Lord Bishop of London, to be appointed, with a guaranteed annual salary, a missionary of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, but, so far, had been unsuccessful in receiving an appointment. After he had been in Lancaster over a year, he took the matter up with the bishop's commissary, the Rev. Dr. Robert Jenney, Philadelphia, who, in Mr. Locke's behalf, wrote the secretary, in part, as follows:

"I have a letter from my Lord of London acquainting [me] of your goodness in promising to mention Mr. Richard Locke to the Society as soon as a vacancy here shall give you an opportunity. He hath been in this Province upwards of two years waiting the result of his Lordship's application to the Society in his favor, and hath labored under great difficulty in Lancaster county, where he officiates; the Church people there not being able to allow him what will keep him above a contemptible poverty. His behavior is such that I am persuaded the Society will not repent their taking him into their service."<sup>4</sup>

The Rev. Richard Backhouse, who officiated in St. John's church, Pequea, also wrote to the secretary in Mr. Locke's behalf.

---

<sup>3</sup> Recorder's Office, Court House, Lancaster, Pa., Book B, Page 188; Book H, Page 39.

<sup>4</sup> Letter of the Rev. Dr. Robert Jenney to the Rev. Dr. Philip Bearcroft dated Philadelphia, October 25th, 1745.

He referred to him as "a sober, regular, inoffensive clergyman," who officiates every other Sunday in Lancaster. Thomas Cookson and others, who were looked upon as leading men of the community, and of being "main pillars of that congregation," never attend and join in the service with him. Mr. Backhouse suggested that if the Society was able financially to support a missionary in this section it would be prudent to have him settle in Pequea, where he would meet a kindly people.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Locke was much discouraged with conditions in Lancaster, and was anxious to be assigned to a mission where he would be assured of a comfortable living. On November 20th, 1745, he was in Philadelphia, and while there learned there were two vacancies in the Province—Apoquinimink and Dover, Delaware. Before returning to Lancaster, he wrote Dr. Bearcroft that the commissary had informed him that he was listed for the first vacancy that might occur in the Province, he would therefore, consider it an honor if the Society would appoint him to either Apoquinimink or Dover. Little did Mr. Locke dream that four months before this time the Society had appointed him itinerant missionary for Pennsylvania and New Jersey, but owing to the slow methods of communication he had not been informed of his appointment.<sup>6</sup>

For ten years prior to the arrival of Mr. Locke in Lancaster, the Rev. William Lindsay was the itinerant missionary for Pennsylvania and New Jersey, having been appointed by the Society in February, 1734.<sup>7</sup> While there is no known evidence to sustain the tradition that he was the missionary who officiated in the court house in Lancaster, as stated by Witham Marshe, at the time he

---

<sup>5</sup> Letter of the Rev. Richard Backhouse to the Rev. Dr. Philip Bearcroft dated Chester, November 15th, 1745.

<sup>6</sup> Journal of The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Vol. 10, pp. 55-56. "July 19, 1745. Resolved to agree with the committee, and that the Rev. Mr. Richard Locke, recommended by the Lord Bishop of London, be appointed to succeed Mr. William Lindsay in the Itinerant Mission of Pennsylvania and New Jersey with a salary of £50 per annum (the duty of the Mission being lessened by Bristol being put under the care of Mr. Campbell) to commence from the time of his beginning duty."

<sup>7</sup> Journal, Vol. 6, pp. 212-213. Rev. William Lindsay appointed February 21, 1734, Itinerant Missionary for Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

accompanied the commissioners from Maryland to the Indian treaty conference, in June, 1744, yet it is generally supposed that in his official capacity he frequently did so. After eleven years of service he seems to have fallen on evil ways. Seven sworn charges were preferred against him, the chief of which was drunkenness. On April 3rd, 1746, the secretary wrote Mr. Locke that the Society had appointed him to succeed Mr. Lindsay, who had been dismissed from the service.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Locke's salary was fixed at £50 per annum, because the church at Bristol was put under the care of another clergyman. The secretary also enclosed a letter which Mr. Locke was instructed to show to the church wardens and vestry at Trenton, and all others within the mission, commending his diligence and prudent conduct to repair the faults of Mr. Lindsay, and praying for God's blessing on his pious labors.

These letters did not reach Mr. Locke until July 21st, 1746, at Trenton, N. J., where he officiated, two days later, in the church, in which no services had been conducted by his predecessor for nearly two years.<sup>9</sup> In view of the high cost of living in Trenton, and that there was no offer of financial assistance, he was unable to settle there. As his appointment to "the mission was, in general, for Pennsylvania and New Jersey," he felt he was not disobeying the orders of the Society by residing for some time in Lancaster, where there was no regularly ordained clergyman of the Church of England, within sixty or seventy miles of that town.

"As for the *Notitia Parochialis*," wrote Mr. Locke, "I shall give you the best account I can of the place, where I have resided for more than two years.<sup>10</sup> It is a new county in Pennsylvania, called Lancaster; the county town goes by the same name, of about

---

<sup>8</sup> Letter of Rev. Dr. Bearcroft to Rev. Richard Locke dated April 3rd, 1746; also another letter on the same date addressed "To the worthy members of the Church of England in Trenton, and in all other places where the Rev. Mr. Lindsay hath been accustomed to officiate as Itinerant Missionary to The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts."

<sup>9</sup> Letter of the Rev. Richard Locke to the Rev. Dr. Bearcroft dated Lancaster, Pa., October 16th, 1746.

<sup>10</sup> Letter of the Rev. Richard Locke to the Rev. Dr. Bearcroft dated Trenton, N. J., April 13th, 1747.

fifteen years standing, and sixty-five miles to the west from Philadelphia. The inhabitants are mostly Dutch; and about three hundred houses, which increase to near twenty every year. Here are about thirty families—English and Irish, mostly poor. Their subscriptions will amount to little more than £5 a year. They [the English and Irish] have no church here of any denomination. I have constantly read prayers, and [have] preached, once a fortnight, in the court house. They have begun a church, but by mismanagement, the leading men being too much inclined to the New Lights, they have run the parish into debt. We have twenty-one justices in this county, who are either Presbyterians, New Lights, or Moravians, and but two or three who profess the religion of the Church of England. The Dutch have two churches here, a Lutheran [Trinity] and Calvinist [First Reformed], besides private conventicles of Menists [Mennonites] and Moravians. Here is a Popish chapel [St. Mary's] commonly supplied once a month by a Jesuit, and there are a great many Papists about the country. I have had nine communicants at one time, and have baptized an abundance brought from the country—several whole families; eight Negroes in one family, but we have no register from the opposition. About twenty miles to the northeast of this town I have supplied, once a fortnight, a congregation [Bangor Church, Churchtown] of mostly Welsh, very regular, and, I believe, near 100 [members]. I have commonly twenty communicants three times a year [at Bangor church, Churchtown], but we have neither Church Bible nor Common Prayer Book; and as for the number of baptized, we have no register though I have several times mentioned it; but, I believe, near 100 [souls].

“There are fifty acres of land purchased for the repairing of the [Bangor] church, which is built of square logs, and I am informed that one hundred [acres] more have been left for a clergyman. Their subscriptions will amount to between £10 and £15 a year. There is another larger congregation, mostly of Irish, about eight miles to the south of the Welsh church, or Bangor, and about twenty miles east from Lancaster, called Pickquay [St. John's, Pequea]. I am told by some of the heads of the parish that their subscriptions might arise to above £20 a year. This place may very well be supplied by the parson who supplies the Welsh. Mr. Richard

Backhouse supplies it at present, some times on week days, although [he lives] forty miles distant from them.

“I had not been long in Lancaster before there came a person from Conewago [Christ church, Huntington, Adams county], about fifty miles to the westward of Lancaster, telling me how much they stood in need of a clergyman, and that they were about one hundred miles distant from any. They had made a purchase of 180 acres of land for the maintainance of a clergyman. After some time, I consented to go with him, and at the first sermon they reckoned about 150 [people]. There were several Dissenters. They count about 100 [persons], for some miles around, who belong to the Church of England. We choose church wardens and settled a vestry. They immediately fell to work to raise a loghouse church. The third time [I officiated there] I administered the Sacrament to thirteen, having baptized thirty-six infants and adults the first time, and several since. They have neither Church Bible nor Common Prayer Book. I believe [they are] very poor, for they could not raise twenty pence to bear my expenses, for money is very scarce in those parts. Ten years ago, there was not a white man in all those parts, but all [were] Indians, who are all gone back into the interior, and it is surprising to think how the white people have since increased.”

Mr. Locke also describes his visit to a place twenty-five or thirty miles to the northeast of Conewago; and his visits to two places “just over the great Susquehanna river, about fourteen miles from Lancaster, where he had congregations of between seventy and eighty people in each place.” York was one of the places he visited.

Mr. Locke's letter to the secretary establishes two very important points: The acquisition of a lot of ground; and the beginning of a church building some time prior to October 16th, 1746. It is generally known that James Hamilton, who is accredited with being the father of Lancaster, granted lots Nos. 35 and 36 on the general plan of the town, subject to a yearly ground rent of thirty shillings, for the use of the Church of England in Lancaster borough; but, for some reason or other, the deed, which unfortunately was not recorded in the court house, was lost or destroyed, and it is not definitely known when Hamilton conveyed the lots. Mr.

Locke's letter makes it clear that it was prior to the fall of 1746. It was also a mooted question as to when work was actually begun on a church building. During the incumbency of Mr. Locke the church in Lancaster was without a minute book. It was not until his successor, the Rev. George Craig entered upon the cure in 1751, that one was procured. Mr. Craig attached much importance to a written record of the parochial activities, and was responsible for procuring minute books for Bangor church, Churchtown, St. John's, Pequea, and the newly organized church in Lancaster.

Critics have assailed him for the opening accounts, which were written twenty years after the churches were established, in the minute books of the first two churches mentioned, contending that much of the information contained in them is traditional and legendary. Be that as it may, we are indebted to the reverend gentleman for a record of the activities of the Lancaster congregation, even if the items were entered in the book six years after the parish was organized. Some time after the meeting on Easter Monday, 1745, sufficient subscriptions had been received to encourage the wardens of the Lancaster church to begin the erection of a building. The record in the original minute book, which, unfortunately, is undated, is as follows:

"Whereas several inhabitants of the borough of Lancaster and parts adjacent, members of the Church of England, have united themselves into a congregation, and have contributed to the support of a minister amongst them; and are further desirous of making an essay towards receiving a sum of money to erect a church upon a lot of ground in the said borough, granted to them by James Hamilton, Esq.; and in order thereto, these presents are offered for subscription for the encouragement of so good and necessary a work.

"Now we, the subscribers, being willing to forward the design of the said congregation, promise to advance and pay the sums set opposite to our respective names to such person or persons as shall be appointed by the congregation above, or a majority of them, to collect and recover the same to be applied towards the building



of a church for the use of the said congregation at such times as the said congregation shall have obtained subscriptions sufficient to induce them to enter upon the [erection of the] said building:

	£	s	d	Daniel Syng	2	0	0
"Thomas Cookson	20	0	0	Thomas Test	0	10	0
John Postlewait	6	0	0	Robert Freeborn	0	10	0
Patrick Carrigan	5	0	0	Roger Hunt	1	0	0
Michael Atkinson	0	10	0	Martin Kindig	2	0	0
John Hendricks	0	10	0	David Jones	2	10	0
James Gardner	1	0	0	William Davis	3	0	0
William Bristow	2	0	0	George Gibson	3	4	0
George Sanderson	4	0	0	Mathew Atkinson	6	0	0
George Gibson	4	0	0	Morgan Morgan (by his order)	3	0	0
Edward Smout	5	0	0	Edward Thornbrough	1	0	0
Edward Taylor	5	0	0	John Davis	2	0	0
John Foulkes	5	0	0	Thomas Cookson	15	0	0
Abraham Johnson		10	0	John Connolly	5	0	0
Thomas and Charles Rause	5	0	0				
Morgan Morgan	3	0	0				
Edward Thornbrough	1	0	0				
Robert Paterson	1	0	0				
					£114	4	0"

Upon the receipt of these subscriptions, or at least a part of them, work was started on a stone church,—44 feet in length, and 34 in breadth. Thomas Cookson, chief burgess of Lancaster and one of the church wardens, was appointed to receive subscriptions and pay the workmen employed in building the church. The stone work being finished and the rafters in place, it was decided to put on the roof, but the expense of doing so exceeded the amount of the subscriptions, and the work was delayed. The congregation being few in number, and many of them in poor circumstances, it was decided to ask the assistance of benevolent and well-disposed persons in defraying the cost of completing the building. Vestrymen and zealous members appealed to Thomas Cookson to use his influence with his friends for subscriptions for the "further carrying on and finishing this so laudable a design, without which we being so few in number, can never accomplish what we have so happily begun." Mr. Cookson used his best endeavors amongst his friends

in Philadelphia, "and by industrious application and unwearied diligence" succeeded in obtaining the following subscriptions:

	£	s	d				
				Edward Shippen	2	0	0
"George Thomas, Esq.				William Plumsted	2	0	0
(Governor)	10	0	0	John Ross	2	0	0
James Hamilton	15	0	0	John Ingles	1	7	0
Richard Peters	5	0	0	Joseph Shippen	1	7	0
Rev. Dr. Robert Jenney	2	17	6	Jacob Duche	0	10	0
Andrew Hamilton	5	0	0	Mark Cool	2	0	0
David Edwards	5	0	0	Lynford Lardner	2	0	0
Thomas Lawrence	3	0	0		—	—	—
Joshua Madox	2	3	6		£61	5	0"

With these additional subscriptions, the congregation was enabled to put a roof on the building; but the church remained unfinished for some time. Mr. Locke wrote, April 11th, 1747, in part, as follows:

"Here [Lancaster] was a church begun above two years ago: but the clerk would not suffer any clergyman to be present at the laying of the foundation, and it is still unfinished. About half an acre of ground was given for that use. Here was near £100 subscribed, and large collections made since, but no one knows what is become of the money. We cannot right ourselves, for we have not the least protection of the law to favor us."

In the fall of the previous year he had traveled 130 miles; once a fortnight, he officiated at Bangor church. There were fifty-nine baptized persons in his mission, and thirty-three communicants. During the past six months he had baptized six adults and one Negro.

"A great many Papists" [live here], he wrote, "but the county is so much covered with woods, for some hundred miles round, that it is impossible to know [how many there are]; but it is very much overspread with New Lights, Whitefield's followers; Covenanters, who receive their sacrament with a gun charged and drawn sword; and profess they would fight for Christ against civil magistrates. The Moravians seem to live in common, and hold a very odd notion of election—that those only are saved who have a drop of Christ's blood in their hearts. They do not increase very

much for want of proper assistance from regular clergymen and some encouragement for their support, as it is in Maryland and Virginia. Mr. Whitefield hath been here twice, invited by the Moravians; but he did not seem to answer their expectations. The Dutch have several odd sects of religion. The Menists [Menonites] that are something reformed from John of Leyden. They somewhat resemble the Quakers, for they bear no arms, and have a sort of community. The Dumpers [Dunkards] which seem in their way of living to be much like the ancient Essenes amongst the Jews. They observe the Saturday, and have all things in common. There is another sort amongst them who have only their assembly every full moon. Here are less Quakers than in many other counties, and but very few Indians appear. Here are ten families of Jews."

Two days later, he wrote: "The Jesuits, New Lights, Quakers, Moravians, Covenanters, Dutch and Irish, prevail so much here that an English clergyman meets with very little protection and much less charity. I have preached here, in the court house in Lancaster, every other Sunday for near three years, and have not received £20 and have had neither surplice nor Common Prayer Book, but what I carry in my pocket." He also informed the secretary that he had called on the Rev. William Lindsay, his predecessor in the office of itinerant missionary for Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Mr. Lindsay acknowledged having received the Society's letter of July 24th, 1746, informing him of his dismissal from its service; but he refused to deliver the books to Mr. Locke as directed by the Society.

The relations between the missionary and his flock in Lancaster were not as harmonious as could be desired. Mr. Backhouse wrote to the Society, explaining the situation as follows:

"The small quantity of Church people about Lancaster town buoy themselves up with an expectation that the Society will open a mission here, to the exclusion of Pequea. But, if you will believe me, the congregation at Pequea, in case I was to be there on a Sunday, exceeds the congregation at Lancaster in a great proportion. But I would not be understood to speak anything in disregard to the people at Lancaster. It would be to my great satisfaction to have a clergyman settled among them, agreeable to all their in-

clinations. However, I must needs say there are some among them who are got into commissions in the government, and who have not religion much at heart; nay who despise Mr. Locke, a regular, sober, good man, and never go to public worship with him, or maintain a friendly, kind, Christian-like intercourse or correspondence with him; who yet set themselves up as the heads of the congregation, and brag of a certain doctor member of the Society who will give credit to their representations before mine, and will bring about everything at the honorable board according to their desire and approbation. I know most of the members of the three congregations, namely, of Pequea, Lancaster and Carnarvon and in what situation their affairs are. If therefore the Society think fit to open a mission there, since these gentlemen of caprice at Lancaster town do not pay a just deference to Mr. Locke, as they ought, I will, with the Society's leave, venture to go to reside among them and settle their church affairs upon such a foundation as perhaps a stranger could not do, provided I may be allowed to fix my place of residence among which of the congregations I please, which (in plain terms) shall be at Pequea. Now if the honorable Society shall think my proposal of any weight, I shall not be willing to do what I've offered without fixing Mr. Locke in my place at Chester."<sup>11</sup>

On May 30th, 1747, the secretary wrote Mr. Lindsay that not only had the Society confirmed its minute of July 19th, 1745, dismissing him from the service, but they had also declared him to be an unfit person to be further employed; and desired him to deliver the Society's library to his successor, Mr. Locke. On the same date a letter was addressed to Mr. Locke informing him of the Society's action, and expressing the hope that he had received the books from Mr. Lindsay.

In the spring of the following year, the church at Lancaster received its first legacy, Mary Prattor, spinster, of Earl township, bequeathed to it the sum of £2, Pennsylvania currency. The money was to be used for the church and was placed at the disposal of the minister and church wardens. Mrs. Prattor, widow of Anthony Prattor, also bequeathed £2 each to the Lutheran church in Earl

---

<sup>11</sup> Letter of the Rev. Richard Backhouse to the Rev. Dr. Bearcroft dated Chester, May 20th, 1747.

township, the Dutch Presbyterian church, in the same township, and the "Popish Church [St. Mary's Roman Catholic] at Lancaster borough."<sup>12</sup>

On September 29th, 1748, Mr. Locke wrote as follows:

"I still continue in Lancaster county in Pennsylvania, and there is no clergyman near that place, though I meet with a great deal of opposition; neither can I yet have any church. The country is so much over run with Jesuitism, Moravians and New Lights, which get ground very much; as the justices and governing part are all of that disposition. Though here are a great many well disposed people, but so scattered about the country that it is impossible under the present circumstances of the place that they should have a proper supply. I have constantly attended a Welsh church, every other Sunday, at twenty miles distance, and have preached and administered the sacraments in several other places about the country, since last March."

Mr. Locke also informed the secretary that he intended embracing the first opportunity of returning to England. On September 10th, 1748, he sold the half acre lot of ground which he had purchased shortly after his arrival in Lancaster borough. He received £120 for it, or a profit of £110, which was quite handsome considering that he had held the lot for only about three years.<sup>13</sup> Soon after disposing of his real estate, he left Lancaster. On October 19th, 1748, Commissary Jenney wrote the secretary: "The county of Lancaster is very large; and what Mr. Locke writes to the honorable Society concerning the state of religion therein I believe is very true. But I am humbly of the opinion that he had neither solidity, temper nor discretion sufficient to mend the matter. And now that he is gone to London by the way of Maryland, \* \* \* and if the honorable Society will please send a prudent person with books proper to encounter such a set of opinions, \* \* \* I am of

---

<sup>12</sup> Office of the Register of Wills, Book A, 1, page 143. Will dated March 14th, 1747-48; proved April 14th, 1748.

<sup>13</sup> Recorder's office. Book L, page 192.

opinion that great advantage will accrue to the propagation of the gospel."

On May 13th, 1749, Mr. Locke was licensed by the Lord Bishop of London for Virginia.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Collections of the Protestant Episcopal Church Historical Society, 1851, pp. 116-118.

#### NOTE

The third and last article on "The Church of England in Lancaster County," by William Frederic Worner, will be printed shortly in a subsequent number.