

DONEGAL CHURCH; COLIN McFARQUHAR, A LAND- MARK OF PRESBYTE- RIAN HISTORY.

W. F. O'Connell

"Two hundred years of prayer and
praise
Of winter months and summer days;
Yet love divine from age to age
Hath kept our precious heritage."

It is interesting to note that in Pennsylvania there are still standing fifty-eight provincial churches, and Donegal is the eighth on the list which have had a continuous existence from the date of organization to the present time.

The first settlement of Scotch-Irish, or Ulster Scots, occupied the post of danger on the Northwest, within the boundaries of Lancaster county, then Chester, about 1715, and was along Chickies Creek, in the vicinity of Donegal Spring. These pioneers named their settlements after the places of their birth. Donegal was a great maritime country of Ireland, for which reason a great number of our early immigrants sailed from this port.

Of the several Scotch-Irish settlements in America in the latter part of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, the one in Donegal township, Lancaster county, Pa., was the most notable. It became the nursery of Presbyterianism in Middle, Western and Southwestern Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina.

Its Organization.

Donegal Church was organized in 1719, or very early in 1720. Some writers claim the date is 1714. Andrew Galbraith, Esq., son of James Galbraith, who came to America with

William Penn, from Queenstown, on his second visit, and whose remains are buried at Derry graveyard, settled upon the land adjoining Donegal Church on the South, in 1718, for which he received a patent from the Penns in 1736 for 212 acres. He was the first ruling elder of this church, and to him belongs the credit of organizing the congregation, and the selection of one of the most admirable and attractive sites for a church edifice within the broad limits of the State.

The first meeting-house was erected with logs, and stood a few yards south of the present structure. After it had been used for a dozen years the present edifice was erected. Loose stones were collected from the surface of the ground in the surrounding woods, with which the walls were built. There was no effort made by the masons to dress the stone; they were simply laid in mortar to a line. The edges were craggy and rough. And there were no stone in the building that one man could not conveniently handle. The walls were plastered on the inside, but the outside was left in its rough state until the remodeling of the house in 1850.

Description of Edifice.

The front of the building was the south side, facing the graveyard, with a double doorway, the only entrance into the house. The door frame and windows had a circular head. The pulpit stood against the northern side and immediately opposite the doorway. A broad aisle led from the door to another one running lengthwise of the building in front of the pulpit. Upon each side of the pulpit and facing it were nine pews. Upon each side of the aisle running from the entrance door were seven pews.

There was also a small aisle near

each end of the room, which ran at right angles to the main aisle, from which entrance was had to corresponding seven pews already mentioned. These pews faced the pulpit. There were four pews facing this small aisle and between it and the end walls. For some years after the church was built the floors of the aisles were composed of earth. No stoves were admitted. An innovation of that kind was considered incompatible with the worship of a true Christian. Gradually, however, two large stoves, cast at Cornwall, were introduced, and the aisles paved with brick. The seats and backs of the pews were made of yellow pine and oak. The backs came to the neck of an ordinary person, and were perpendicular. At the corners of the pews were corner boards rounded out to fit the backs, and which really made it more uncomfortable to sit.

Two or three rows of pews in front of the pulpit had inclined shelves, upon which the hymn books were placed. Of course, there was no paint upon any of the woodwork. Thus the building stood until 1772, when it was remodeled.

Some Early Preachers.

Rev. David Evans supplied the Donegal Church in 1720, and Rev. Geo. Gillespie and Rev. Robert Cross were among the supplies in 1721, probably for the year 1722 also. In the fall of 1723, Rev. Messrs. Alexander, Hutcheson and Daniel McGill were sent by New Castle Presbytery. In 1725 Rev. Adam Boyd, of Octoraro, gave Donegal the one-sixth of his time. On the 24th day of September, 1726, Rev. James Anderson was called to the pastorate of the church, and on the last Wednesday in August, 1727, he was installed. He died July 16, 1740. Rev. Hamilton Bell had charge of the

church from 1742 until the fall of 1743. The pulpit was supplied by Presbytery until November 23, 1748, when Rev. Joseph Tate was installed as pastor, in which relation he continued until his death, October 11, 1774, a period of twenty-six years.*

The Presbytery of Donegal

The Presbytery of Donegal was organized October 11, 1732, and was fifth in line of succession in the United States, following the organization of the Presbyteries of Philadelphia, Snow Hill, New Castle and Long Island. Following is the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism, which was signed by the members of the church:

"I, having seriously read and perused the Westminster Confession and Catechism, do declare in the sight of God and all here present, that I do believe, and am fully persuaded, that so far as I can discern and understand said Confession and Catechism, they are in all things agreeable to the Word of God, taking them in the plain and obvious sense and meaning of the words, and accordingly I do acknowledge them as the Confession of my faith, and do promise through divine assistance forever to adhere thereunto. I also believe the Directory for the Exercise of Worship, Discipline and Government, commonly connected to said Confession, to be agreeable to the word of God, and do promise to conform thereunto in my practice, as far as in emergent circumstances, I can attain unto.

Samuel Caven, Samuel Thomson, John Craig, John Hindman, Hamilton Bell, Robert McMordie, Alex'r Creaghead, Sam'l Black, David Alexander, John Elder, Richard Sanckey, Thomas

*Encyclopaedia of Presbyterian Church. By Alfred Nevin, D.D., LL.D., Editor.

Creaghead, Jas. Anderson, Samuel Gelston, Adam Boyd, John Paull and Joseph Tate.

Mr. Lang's Church, East Conegogue.

Second Tuesday of April, 1776, and ninth day of the month, the Presbytery met according to adjournment V. P. P. S., the Rev. Messrs. Slemons, Cooper, Lang, Balch, King, Vance, McFerven and Creaghead, with James Moor, William Porter, John McDorvel, Samuel Park, Wm. Rankin, and John Neilson, Elders. Absent, Rev. Messrs. Samuel Thompson, Hogg, Rhea, Hunt, Amos, Thompson, Black and Dougal.

The Presbytery was opened by Mr. Cooper with a sermon and Psalm 97-1. "Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God, for it is pleasant and praise is comely."

Mr. Vance was chosen Moderator and Mr. Balch as clerk for the current year.

Rev. Mr. McFarquhar produced ample Testimonials from the Presbytery of Gairlock, in Scotland, bearing date April 7, 1775, and a Certificate of Dismission from said Presbytery, bearing date May 25, 1775. In consequence of which, the Presbytery unanimously agree in cheerfully receiving him as a member of this judicatrive, and do accordingly receive him. Ordered that Mr. Lang take care of the above-mentioned papers, and that they may be produced to the Synod at their next meeting.

Ordered that supplications and all other papers directed to the Presbytery be brought on and read.

A call to Rev. Colin McFarquhar from the united congregations of Donegal and Mt. Joy was brought in by Messrs. James Anderson and Thomas Clingau, commissioners for said congregations. The commissioners represent that the congregations engage to pay Mr. Mc-

Farquhar annually the sum of one hundred pounds, to be secured to Mr. McFarquhar, by bonds or otherwise, to his satisfaction, and also they engage to allow to him the use of the glebe belonging to the said congregation of Donegal, under proper restrictions, or the sum of twenty pounds annually, if Mr. McFarquhar shall choose that rather than the use of said glebe.

They further allow that said annual salary commence on the First day of January last, provided that Mr. McFarquhar accept their call, the congregation allowing twenty pounds in lieu of the use of the glebe for the current year, and these stipulations they allow to be binding on them as long as Mr. McFarquhar shall continue the orderly minister of said congregation.

The Presbytery, having found that said call was orderly prepared and prosecuted, delivered the same to Mr. McFarquhar, who declared his acceptance of it.

Eleventh day, a. m.—The Presbytery met according to adjournment P. P. S. Q. S. Ordered to read the minutes of last Sederent. Messrs. Cooper, Lang and Creaghead are appointed to attend at Donegal to install Mr. McFarquhar on the first Tuesday after the adjournment of Synod, Mr. Lang to preach, Mr. Cooper to preside in that affair.

Twelfth day, 9 o'clock a. m.—Presbytery met, except Mr. Wilson and Mr. McFarquhar, who had leave to go home. P. P. S. Q. S.

Upper West Conegocheague, October, 1777, Presbytery met.

Mr. McFarquhar, the stated Moderator, being absent, Mr. Lang was chosen Moderator pro tem.

Minutes of Synod of New York and Philadelphia.

May 22, 1776—Donegal Presbytery report that they have received Rev. Mr. McFarquhar from Scotland and laid the credentials upon which they received him before the Synod, with which the Synod being satisfied, Mr. McFarquhar being present took his seat.

May 21, 1777—From the Presbytery of Donegal, Rev. Messrs. Robert Cooper, Colin McFarquhar and James Martin.

Messrs. Robert Smith, Spencer, McFarquhar, with James Thompson, elder, are appointed a committee of overtures to meet in this place to-morrow at 8 o'clock a. m., and by adjournment afterward as occasion may require.

May 23, 1777—A supplication from a society of Highland Scots of Southland was brought in by the committee of overtures and read, requesting that the Synod would supply them with books and appoint Mr. McFarquhar to preach and administer the Gospel ordinances amongst them.

This Synod, taking their request into consideration, do order a collection of books to be made throughout their Presbyteries for these people, and appoint Mr. McFarquhar to supply them some time, and administer the Gospel ordinances as he sees proper, and also to supply the adjacent vacant congregations in Northumberland four Sabbaths, and they order the Presbytery of Donegal to supply Mr. McFarquhar's pulpit in the meantime.

May 22, 1786.—The Presbytery of Donegal be divided into two Presbyteries—one to be known as the Presbytery of Baltimore, and the other by the name of the Presbytery of Carlisle, and to hold their first meeting agreeably to the adjournment of the late present Donegal.

May 22, 1786—That Rev. Colin McFarquhar, late of the Presbytery of Donegal, be annexed to the Presbytery of New Castle.

Arrival of Rev. McFarquhar at Donegal.

Early in the spring of 1776 Rev. Colin McFarquhar came to Donegal. His first home was at the public house of Samuel Scott, who lived at Big Chickies creek. Mr. Scott died in the spring of 1776, and left one hundred pounds to Donegal Church. Rev. McFarquhar was a witness to his will. He boarded with the widow for nine years. Before he came to Donegal, he was at Bedford for a few months. When his family came, he purchased several hundred acres of land from James Cunningham, between Mt. Joy and Sporting Hill. An agreement was made between them, but when the land came to be surveyed it seems there were many more acres within the described limits in the agreement than there were supposed to be, and Mr. Cunningham refused to execute the deed. Mr. McFarquhar took the case to the Supreme Court, which compelled Mr. Cunningham to make a deed.

A charter was granted to Rev. Colin McFarquhar, John Baillie, Jas. Baillie, James Anderson, Robert Spear, Brice Clark, Samuel Woods, James Muirhead and Joseph Little as trustees, and their successors, on September 11, 1786. They found it necessary to have a charter in order to sell part of their land, which they did immediately on receipt of the official paper.

The congregation of Mr. McFarquhar was composed of some of the wealthiest landholders in the State, but they were not prompt in paying his salary, and quite a large amount of back pay was allowed to accumulate. The congregation agreed to sell all

the glebe lands of 212 acres, reserving but thirty or forty acres—the amount of money for the sale to James Moorehead at \$45 for an acre to be paid to Mr. McFarquhar.

His Prayers Too Long.

Morning and afternoon services were often held in the church, and it was not an uncommon occurrence for Mr. McFarquhar to pray for one hour and fifteen minutes. On a certain occasion, and when seated upon a log to partake of a lunch with Col. Lowrey, that bluff old man said to him: "Nicodemus, you must make your prayers a little shorter."

Mr. McFarquhar helped to organize the Presbyterian Church in Columbia and a supply in 1805. They worshipped in private houses and sometimes in the warehouses along the river. He also preached in York, Chanceford and in the churches of the Cumberland Valley, by order of the Presbytery.

In the history of Franklin and Marshall College, by Rev. Dr. Dubbs, Colin McFarquhar, minister in 1807, was named, with others, on a committee "who will from time to time visit the Franklin Academy and examine the progress of the pupils."

Became a Patriot.

One Sunday morning, while the congregation was at worship, an express rider came to Donegal Church and announced that Howe's army had left New York with the intention of invading Pennsylvania. Rev. Mr. McFarquhar had persisted in praying for the King, until this Sunday morning, after service, the officers of the church called him out, and, under the famous tree, offered him the alternative of casting his fortune with them or quitting his charge. He promised fealty to the Revolutionary cause, and

from that time on was loyal to the Colonies and a true patriotic and Christian character he displayed in always keeping to the letter of his vows of fidelity. As Burke says: "Our Liberty becomes a noble freedom."

A Graduate of Edinburgh.

Mr. McFarquhar came from Gairloch, Dumbarton county, Scotland. Gairloch is a lake, a branch of the Firth of Clyde. It is seven miles long, with a village of the same name at its head and a summer resort with cottages along its banks—not hotels. Vessels were sent there to adjust compasses after they were built, until the invention of Lord Kelvin made it unnecessary.

Mr. McFarquhar was a fine scholar, a graduate of Edinburgh University. During his thirty years' pastorate he conducted a classical school and prepared young men for college. The presidents of Washington and Princeton Colleges said that he was so thorough and rigid in his teaching, his scholars so well prepared in the classics, that they at once took high rank among the students.

He visited the families which extended more than ten miles from the church. He catechised old and young, and kept a complete roll of each family and members of the congregation. The list numbered 500.

Mr. Samuel Evans says: "I have seen his translations and marginal notes of Latin and Greek books used by him in teaching in Scotland, or while he was in college. From the names and references in one of these books showed he descended from a highly-educated ancestry, some of whom were evidently professors in Edinburgh College. He was a man of wonderful energy and powerful physique."

On November 15, 1786, the first meeting of the Board of Trustees, constituted by an Act of Assembly, was held at Donegal. It was convened by Rev. Colin McFarquhar, those present being Messrs. Robert Spear, John Baillie, Jas. Muirhead, Samuel Woods, Brice Clark and Joseph Little. Mr. James Anderson was absent. Mr. McFarquhar was elected president, Mr. Joseph Little, secretary, and Mr. Samuel Woods, treasurer. The trustees appointed the following persons to collect the minister's salary, due before January, 1787: Mr. Robert Spear, Mr. John Baillie, Thomas Baillie, Jr., Mr. Brice Clark, Mr. Samuel Wood, Mr. James Moorehead and Mr. Joseph Little.

On November 25, 1788, Mr. McFarquhar produced an account against the congregation from April, 1784, to April, 1788, amounting to twenty pounds, for keeping the books, as their clerk. In a receipt dated May 7, 1806, he says: "My pastoral labors in the church at Donegal terminate at the above date, and therefore the above is a receipt in full for all my pastoral services in said church."

In the Donegal churchyard is a grave marked thus:

In memory of
Mrs. Elizabeth McFarquhar, wife of
Rev. Colin McFarquhar Minister of the
Gospel at Donegal,
who departed this life on the 6th day of
August, A. D. 1805, and in the 64th
year of her age.

The death of Mrs. McFarquhar was a great sorrow to him. He was at that time seventy-five years of age, and he decided to give up his charge and live with his daughter, Mrs. Wilson, in Lancaster, where he remained several years, when he removed to Hagerstown in 1814, to live with his daughter, Mrs. D. Cook, where he lived until God took him. He was

buried in the Presbyterian Church there with the following epitaph:

Here lies the remains of
Rev. Colin McFarquhar,
A native of Scotland,

30 years Pastor of Presbyterian Church
of Donegal, Lancaster Co., Pa.,
who died 27th August, 1822, full of
years, having reached the age of 93.

Also, his daughter, Mrs. Mary Cooke,
who died,

August 22, 1820, aged 64 years.

Also, David Cook, Esq., her husband,
who died June 12th, 1821.

Also, their Daughter,

Mrs. Eliza C. Boggs,
who died December 4, 1817.

His Remains Reinterred at Donegal.

During the present year the remains of Mr. McFarquhar, his wife and children were removed from Hagerstown and reinterred at Donegal. On that occasion Mrs. M. N. Robinson wrote the following poem:

In the blessed peace of God
Rests 'neath this hallowed sod,

Near the church where he of old
Gathered men into the fold.

And, as pledge of Love Divine,
Reverent gave the Bread and Wine.

Where he sought to point the Way
To the realms of endless day.

Now, within those old walls' shade
Here his mortal form is laid.

Guard it well, oh, sacred sod!
In the blessed Peace of God.

A Poem by Sallie Hastings.

Mrs. Sallie Hastings, daughter of Robert Anderson, of Leacock township, and whose widow later married Brice Clark, published a book of poems in 1808. Dickson, of Lancaster, was the printer. She was an attendant of Donegal Church during the ministry of Mr. McFarquhar. On January 4, 1806, she dedicated the following poem to

THE REV. C. McF—R.

Stranger, behold yon venerable man,
Whose rev'rend form majestically
moves,

With native grace, along the velvet
plain,

Before the little flock he dearly loves.

He, from the famous isle of Scotland
fair,
Embarked, early, for our peaceful
shore,
And left the tender partner of his care,
With three sweet babes, his absence to
deplore.

Columbia's fertile regions to explore
Was his design; then homeward to re-
pair,
And bring those darling treasures
with him o'er,
And come and preach a free salvation
here.

'Twas now the arduous conflict first
began
Between Columbia and Britannia's isle;
Affrighted peace forsook the bleeding
land,
And armed hosts contended for the
soil.

No more the cheerful song of lab'ring
swains
Thro' sylvan groves re-echo'd, from
afar;
But groans of dying anguish fill'd the
plains,
And all the mingled sounds of wasting
war.

Now blood and slaughter marked their
crimson way,
And martial fleets invested ev'ry shore;
Confusion rag'd, and thund'ring o'er
the sea,
Bellona dy'd the waves with crimson
gore.

Fair peace, at length, her olive-branch
display'd,
And o'er Columbia's coast bade freedom
reign;
The war-worn hero sheath'd his reek-
ing blade,
And tranquil happiness return'd again.

For ten long years no wife or child
saw he,
Far separated by the foaming flood;
At length his pray'r was heard; they
o'er the sea
Were safely wafted, by a faithful God.

Full thirty years, from yonder sacred
dome,
Did he proclaim Salvation's joyful
sound;

To train immortals for a life to come,
A teacher from his God, he yet is found.

Threescore and ten revolving summers
shed

Their silver dews, to deck his locks
with gray;

Their hoary influence upon his head
Has ripened age to full maturity.

Smoothly he glides down life's tem-
pestuous sea,

Enjoying health, and happiness, and
ease.

And finds his strength proportioned
to his day,
And ends, belov'd, his spotless life in
peace.

Where are the crowds which once did
throng those pews?
Go ask yon marble tombs; they will
reveal
That they, in mournful state, do now
enclose
The faded forms which once those
walls did fill.

Yet still their pastor lives; while, one
by one,
Survivors own the awful Monarch's
sway;
He still proclaims salvation's joyful
sound,
Directs their flight to heav'n, and leads
the way.

Father of light and life, Thou God
above,
O, may Thy Spirit aid his feeble breath;
O may Thy arms of everlasting love
Support, defend him, in the hour of
death

And, when consigned to the peaceful
tomb,
May guardian angels watch his
crumbling dust,
Till the last trumpet calls the faith-
ful home;
Then wake to joys immortal, with the
just.

Mrs. Hastings wrote to her mother,
at Donegal, Mrs. Brice Clark, from
Cross Creek, Washington county, Pa.,
where she moved with her sister and
family as follows:

“(In favor of Mr. Elder).

“Cross Creek, Aug. 13, 1804.

“Dear Mother:

“.....I go very little abroad, only
to meeting. There I attend as regu-
larly as the church doors are open. I
will not say it is merely religion
takes me there, believe indeed it is
more for the pleasure I take in hear-
ing the eloquent pastor speak than
the sound divine—but be that as it
may, it is for the pleasure of hear-
ing Mr. Marquis alone. To hear him
is harmony, though he often gives us
the truth of the law in all its sever-
ity. He has before now fairly made
me jump off my seat with terror and

slapping the pulpit. If he would only quit that he would be the sweetest man in the world, but the people here would not like him if he would preach in moderation. He is the dreadfulest thunder I ever heard. Nothing seems more at variance than his preaching and his countenance—one is all terror, talking all sweetness and mild persuasion. Scold as he may, I will serve him. Nay, I cannot help it. He was formed to be served—it is only giving him his dues. But you Donegal people would not hear him at all if he would take a fit of sending you to the D—, and that he would do without any ceremony for things you would scarce think you merited, such rough treatment.

“Oh, how he would handle your dancing and singing, your dressing, and gay conversations, your giddy round of visits, your taste and refinements, your preparations for company and all the folly of your fashions. I just wish to hear him at you, yet he would do it so nicely and with such a grace that you would love him nevertheless.”

• Rev. Thomas Marquis was born at Opequon, near Winchester, Va., and was the most eminent pulpit orator of his day. The tones of his voice were exceedingly musical, hence he was often called “The Silver-tongued Marquis.” He was pastor of the church at Cross Creek, Washington county, for thirty-two years, from 1794 to 1826.

In a paper read before the Iris Club of Lancaster, Pa., by Hon. W. U. Hensel, the title “A Literary Grass Widow,” in which he reviews Mrs. Hastings’ literary productions, he says of her: “A star that flickered feebly in the constellation of local poesy and then was lost to the liter-

ary view—a flower that blushed not altogether unseen, but whose fragrance was wasted on an unsympathetic air.” Do you think so?

The Death of Rev. McFarquhar.

In searching the files of the Lancaster Journal since writing the sketch I found the following:

“Departed this life on the 28th of August at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. David Cook, Hagerstown, Md., in the ninety-first year of his age, Colin McFarquhar, minister of the Gospel. The deceased was born in the Highlands of Scotland in 1732, and had the charge there of two congregations for thirteen or fourteen years. He emigrated to this country in the year 1775, accepted a call to Donegal congregation, Lancaster county, Pa., and continued their minister for upwards of thirty years. During forty-eight years since he came to this country he has never been known to be sick more than three days and retained his senses to the last.”

On the ship with Rev. McFarquhar in the passage to America in 1774 came Donald Cameron and his son, John, Simon Cameron and his wife, with her sister, Ann McKenzie, who were the ancestors of Hon. Simon Cameron and his son, J. Donald Cameron, who are so closely identified with the history of our county and State, not forgetting they, too, have national fame.

As a tribute to these emigrants from Bonny Scotland and their descendants and their prominence in the religious and political life of our nation, I quote the following: “A Scot will always help a Scot. Centuries of struggle and hardship have taught the Scottish people to be in all

changes of fortune and down to the gates of death loyal and loving one another." To use the beautiful phrase of Robert Louis Stevenson: "No amount of world-wandering can make them forget their national traditions. Even if their little homeland were to be rolled out flat, it would be smaller than Indiana; yet to Scottish eyes there is no land like it."

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