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# REHOBOTH BY THE RIVER.



BY

*REV. JOHN SIMONSON HOWK, D. D.*



POCOMOKE CITY, MD. :

1897.

# Rehoboth by the River.

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FOR the purpose of erecting a Monument to the memory of Francis Makemie, the Father of the American Presbyterian Church, at Rehoboth, Maryland, the Session of said Church offers this Book,—the History of Rehoboth Church—for sale at Twenty-five cents per copy, hoping this may be supplemented by good Presbyterians, feeling interested in our enterprise by a contribution to such extent as they may feel able. A list of all contributions will be placed in the monument, also published in one of our Church papers. E. G. Polk, Clerk of Session, has been appointed Treasurer. All donations and subscriptions to the Book may be forwarded to him at Pocomoke City, Maryland.

By Order of Session,

REV. J. S. HOWK, D.D., Moderator.

ELDERS { E. G. POLK, —  
R. W. ADAMS,  
E. S. BROUGHTON.

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BY

JOHN SIMONSON HOWK.

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E. G. Polk.

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“ Our mission was from Jesus Christ,  
and warranted from the Scriptures.”

—MAKEMIE.



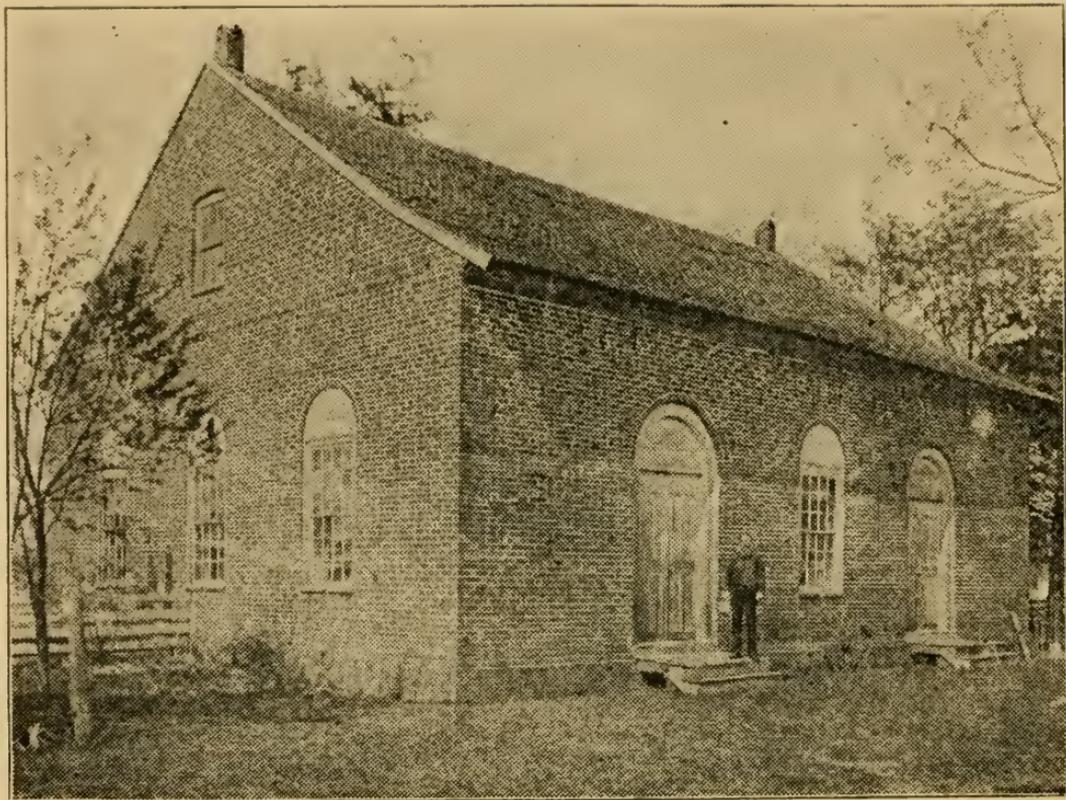
POCOMOKE CITY,  
—————  
LEDGER-ENTERPRISE.

## PREFACE.

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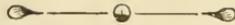
This little sketch is sent forth with the purpose of arousing in Presbyterian hearts a greater interest in a church which has well been called "The Mother of Ten Thousand Churches." The American Presbyterian Church can never pay the debt of gratitude she owes to Francis Makemie. The founder of our church in this country has gone to claim a brighter reward than any earthly crown. The little church he organized, built, loved, ministered to, and sought to provide for even after his death, is with us still, and should not be suffered to die of neglect.

I wish especially to acknowledge the kindness and valuable assistance of Rev. Dr. Bowen, the author of "Days of Makemie," and the pioneer in this research, and express my gratitude to all other kind friends who have given me information. This is the first attempt to set forth in order the facts from the beginning concerning the old Rehoboth church. It has taken much care and labor in consulting meagre records to reach anything like certainty, but it is believed the result will be found substantially accurate, and containing much that has never appeared in print.



REHOBOTH, MD., PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN 1885.

## “REHOBOTH BY THE RIVER.”—Gen. 36 : 37.



**I**F we leave our Nation's capital and take our course Southward upon the broad Potomac, with its picturesque and wooded slopes, past Alexandria and the historic heights of Mt. Vernon, and, still further on, the birthplace of Washington, in Westmoreland County ; if leaving these we follow the tortuous windings of the river till it opens on the Chesapeake ; as we gain the bay we find ourselves confronting shores that should be endeared to every Presbyterian heart as the early cradle of our mighty Church in its infancy upon this Continent. Just opposite the mouth of the Potomac lies Tangier Sound, running north and south behind an island barrier, and Pocomoke Sound, running nearly east and west. Crossing the shallow, muddy flats at the eastern extremity of Pocomoke Sound, we would enter a swift and narrow stream, whose dark-hued waters gave the Indian name of Pocomoke to the Sound and River, as well as to the little town that lay around the venerable Church. Ascending the singular river, whose waters would float a war vessel—the deepest river in the world in proportion to its length and width—we come to the scene of this sketch, at a distance of about ten miles from its mouth. Here, disembarking, let us look upon the quaint, time-honored structure, and gather up its greetings from the past.

These regions were inhabited, at the time of our

first historical acquaintance with them, by Indians of the Nanticoke nation, who took their tribal name from the river—Pocomoke. Sebastian Cabot passed along the sea coast in 1498, but the first white men to explore the Sound and River were a party under the command of the redoubtable Captain John Smith, who entered the river in search of fresh water, in 1608. Landing probably at the old Indian town a short distance below Rehoboth, Smith bargained with the savages for the precious fluid, but describes with some disgust the “puddle water,” which was the best the country could offer. This same river, on the 23d of April, 1635, was the scene of a miniature naval battle between two vessels of Governor Calvert’s and one of William Clayborne’s, and several men were slain.

After the settlement of Maryland upon the Western Shore of the Chesapeake, in 1634, the first incident which affected the history of this region was the famous Religious Toleration Act of 1649. This was the first declaration of its kind made by any government in the world. Enacted under Governor Stone and at the time of Cromwell’s pre-eminence, it was perhaps brought about through Lord Baltimore’s desire to save those of his own Catholic faith from persecution, while, in the providence of God, it resulted in making these lands a refuge for the oppressed and persecuted of every nation. The following is the wording of the great Act :

“WHEREAS, The enforcing of the conscience in matters of religion hath frequently fallen out to be of dangerous consequence in those Commonwealths where it hath been practiced ; and for the more quiet

and peaceable government of this Province, and the better to preserve mutual love and unity amongst the inhabitants here: Be it, therefore, by the Lord Proprietary, with the advice and assent of this Assembly, ordained and enacted, that no person or persons whatsoever within this Province, or the islands, ports, harbors, creeks or havens thereunto belonging, professing to believe in Jesus Christ, shall from henceforth be any ways troubled, molested or discountenanced, for or in respect of his or her religion, nor in the free exercise thereof within this Province or the islands thereunto belonging, nor any way compelled to the belief or exercise of any other religion against his or her conscience."

In contrast with this, the laws of the neighboring colony of Virginia were very severe against Quakers and other dissenters, with penalties for absenting themselves from the established Church or "assembling to the number of five for the purpose of religious worship," of heavy fines, imprisonment, or even banishment from the Province. Under such conditions it was only natural that but few dissenters were to be found upon the Virginia peninsula, while upon that part within the province of Maryland, besides Episcopalians, the first settlers were Quakers and English dissenters, to be added to later on by those fleeing from persecution in Ireland, and the French Huguenots escaping from the second persecution under Louis XIV. As early as 1656 we can find evidence of but a few scattered settlements here, and certainly none of any assemblies for worship.

About this time occurred the visit of Rev. Francis Doughty to Maryland. There seems to be considerable doubt as to his movements. He seems to have

come to the Western Shore about 1657, and resided for a time on the Patuxent, preaching to a mixed congregation of Puritans. This makes it very unlikely that he even attempted to organize a Presbyterian church there, for, as Dr. Bowen says, at that time "Independency hated Presbyterianism as much as it did Prelacy." Doughty afterwards went to the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and his name is to be found upon the Northampton Court Records. Both there and upon the Western Shore he ministered to the Episcopalians, and, though a Presbyterian, conformed sufficiently to be classed by Bishop Meade in his "Old Churches and Families of Virginia," as one of their own clergy. This was not such an unusual thing at that date, but it shows that the bent of Doughty's mind was evidently not at that time toward a separate organization. Later they complain of him as a Nonconformist. He is said to have died on the Eastern Shore of Virginia about 1661.

Meanwhile the settlements were growing in southeastern Maryland. Colonel William Stevens, a native of Buckinghamshire, England, patented the Rehoboth plantation as his home in 1665, taking its name from Genesis 26:22: "And he removed from thence and digged another well, and for that they strove not; and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the Lord hath made room for us and we shall be fruitful in the land." Colonel Stevens was a man of wealth and great prominence. He seems to have been undoubtedly a Presbyterian, and some think he was later on a Ruling Elder, but of this the writer can find no record. Of his love for religion and sympathy with the oppressed there can be no doubt. With the organization of the county of Somerset in 1666, he was made Judge of the County

Court, which position he retained until his death. He was buried in 1687, on his farm about a half mile from the church. Public benefactor though he was even his tomb was lost to view, and so late as February 13, 1853, Rev. James L. Vallandigham, D. D., LL.D., at that time pastor of the church, located the spot, and removing the earth which then covered the simple marble slab disclosed to view the following inscription :

HERE LYETH THE BODY OF  
WILLIAM STEVENS, ESQ.,  
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE  
23d OF DECEMBER, 1687,  
AGED 57 YEARS.

He was 22 years Judge of this County Court, one of His Lordship's Councill, and one of the Deputy Lieutenants of this Province of Maryland.

Vivit post Funera Virtus.

It seems only proper that the Presbyterian Church, the county of Somerset, and the State of Maryland should take some step in recognition of his prominence and long and faithful services, to guard this historic relic from oblivion.

In 1667, Richard Stevens, a younger brother of the Colonel, died and was buried in the same burial ground, but no trace of his grave has as yet been found. The ruins of the house of Colonel Stevens are, however, plainly to be distinguished, not far from the grave. The farm is at present (1897) owned by Mr. David Shaw, a member of the Rehoboth Presbyterian Church.

As early as 1670, as the Scotch, Scotch Irish, French and Quakers continued to seek these friendly shores, a small hamlet was growing up at the great bend of the river, known at first as Pocomoke Town but a little later taking the name of the Stevens plantation—Rehoboth. The prominence of Colonel Stevens in the colony made it a place of importance far beyond its size. The names that have come down to us from the early records of the place show the mixture there of the different nationalities mentioned. Presbyterians were certainly settled there, and gaining in numbers, but they were mostly quite poor or had lost their property by confiscations during the period of persecution. Nevertheless, the longing for pure gospel preaching soon manifested itself in a marked way.

Encouraged, as it seems, by their righteous Judge, we find it set forth on the Somerset County records, that the Grand Jury in 1672, through their foreman, David Brown, a Scotchman and certainly a Presbyterian, called Rev. Robert Maddux to preach at four places in the county. One of these places was "the house of Mr. William Stevens at Pocomoke"—that is, of course, Rehoboth. We have good ground for claiming Robert Maddux as a Presbyterian, and it is a matter of record that he preached statedly at Rehoboth in 1672. There was, however, no church building or organization.

A little later George Fox, the great Apostle of the Quakers, sought these shores, and went from place to place preaching. The people thronged to hear this wonderful man. He came to Rehoboth, where the great sympathetic heart of William Stevens made room for him, and there, on the 23d of January 1673, as Colonel Stevens tells us, he preached to a congrega-

tion of several thousand whites and Indians, and the Quakers established a monthly meeting there. The settlement of Pennsylvania in 1681 soon drew them away. Colonel Stevens graphically describes the zeal and earnestness of Fox, as he stood in the doorway of the house preaching, in his famous "leather breeches."

The period from 1673 to 1679 was one of steady growth and prosperity for the little community at Rehoboth. Popish plots, persecutions and counter-persecutions continued to disturb the unhappy people of Great Britain and Ireland, and in consequence the settlement was enlarged by the addition of other Presbyterian families fleeing to this haven of rest. There is no doubt that Colonel Stevens sought to direct them hither by express invitation. At last, in 1680, he sought further to provide for their spiritual needs, writing himself to the Presbytery of Laggan, in Ireland, and desiring them to send over a godly minister to gather the congregation of exiles into a church. This presbytery was enduring the fires of persecution to such an extent between 1681 and 1684 as to have resolved to emigrate in a body to the new world. In June 1681 several of the members were in prison, and we can find no records of their meetings for several years. Persecution was especially severe against Rev. Wm. Trail, the clerk of the Presbytery, who lay in prison for eight months, and was burned in effigy about the beginning of June, 1682, shortly after his release. Dr Hays in "Presbyterians" says he came to these parts in 1682, but the first record of his presence here is a marriage solemnized by him in December, 1684. It does not seem at all likely that he preceded Rev. Francis Makemie. Makemie was licensed in the latter part of 1681, and ordained soon after, and this with the purpose of sending him as a

missionary to Somerset county, in response to Colonel Stevens' request. He was certainly in Ireland as late as April 1682, and was at Rehoboth in 1683. If Trail had accompanied or preceded him, Rev. Samuel McMaster, who was for many years the pastor of Makemie's daughter, would have known of it. He wrote a "History of the Rehoboth Church," being at the time also pastor at Snow Hill and Pitts Creek. This book is unfortunately lost, but the fact of his singling out this one of his three charges would go to show that it was the oldest. In addition to this, however, the few extracts from that History which are yet extant assert that the first Presbyterian congregation was at Rehoboth, and that Makemie was the first pastor of that church. In 1683, the town took another step forward, being made a port of entry. The writer has not the slightest wish to take anything from the proper honors of Snow Hill, but his investigations have all resulted in establishing the superior importance of Rehoboth at that date. Of the five ports of entry named in 1683, Rehoboth is the only one now in existence. Snow Hill is not one of them, but in 1686 "Burrowstown" is "untowned" and its honors given to Snow Hill, which after that begins to grow in importance, and calls Samuel Davis as her Presbyterian pastor. These are all matters of record.

Francis Makemie was a man of great force of character, and his works do testify of him. He is described as having a typical Irish face; brown wavy hair, high intellectual forehead, fair complexion, expressive blue eyes, and a smooth face. The only portrait in existence was destroyed by fire early in the present century. He was a man of earnest piety and a sterling advocate of the doctrines of the Westminster Confession. He was thoroughly wideawake,

active in maintaining his rights, careful and prudent in business matters, with a talent for leadership and organization. He had not been long in this country before we can perceive the impress of a master hand. He was not content with the organization of Rehoboth church, but traveled about from place to place, becoming acquainted with the needs of the country from the Carolinas and Barbadoes northward as far as Massachusetts. He organized churches at Pitts Creek, Snow Hill, Manokin, and Wicomico according to reliable tradition. There is also a strong tradition that he erected a "meeting house" at Steven's Ferry, now Pocomoke City, about eight miles above Rehoboth. The early name of this place was Meeting House Landing, which would of itself indicate that either Quakers or Presbyterians had a house of worship there, and other facts go to show it was the Presbyterians. It seems very certain that there was a church building there, and it may have dated from Makemie's time, but a careful weighing of the best information obtainable would place its erection not earlier than 1706. If it was erected then, it would seem to have been an experiment, and soon abandoned as a regular place of worship. Ancestors of some of the oldest heads are said to have attended worship there about 1745, but these may have been the special revival meetings under Robinson and Davies. Some ruins of the building, it is said, remained in 1800. No records can be found to substantiate this.

On the other hand there is good evidence of a Presbyterian pastor, church organization and building, at Rehoboth in 1683. Makemie was soon followed, probably at his own request, by William Trail and Samuel Dayis, who are recorded as in Somerset County in 1684, and by Thomas Wilson

possibly in the same year. About 1686 Makemie departed on a preaching tour southward, and Trail took charge of Rehoboth church in the same year, taking up his residence on the farm he had just purchased about a mile below Rehoboth, near the Jenkins property. Colonel Francis Jenkins, a justice and another member of "His Lordship's Council." and his young wife, Lady Mary, daughter of Sir Robert King, contributed, by their residence, to the growing importance of Rehoboth. The town received a severe blow in the death of Colonel Stevens in 1687. William Trail continued in charge of the church until 1689, when the desolate condition of the Scotch churches led him to return to his native land, leaving his wife to sell their farm and follow him as soon as she could be assured it was safe to return. At this period, from 1686 to 1698, Samuel Davis was minister at Snow Hill and Thomas Wilson at Manokin. In 1690 Makemie, who had returned to the Eastern Shore, was living at Matchatank, Va., but on Trail's departure he resumed preaching at Rehoboth, though still continuing to reside in Virginia. In 1691 he married Naomi Anderson, and after this seems to have resided at Rehoboth until 1699, when apparently because of Mr. Anderson's death and his inheritance of the vast estate, he removed again across the river and continued to reside at the Anderson place, now Holden's Creek, until his death, in 1708. In all this time he continued to preach at Rehoboth, though frequently absent. Once, in 1705, he was absent for nearly a year in Europe returning with John Hampton, who took charge at Snow Hill, and George Macnish, who went to Manokin. In 1706, he had the new church building at Rehoboth, which is the one still standing, erected upon his own land, to protect

it from the intolerant laws which had then for some years prevailed in Maryland. In the same year he organized the first General Presbytery of America, at Philadelphia, and was chosen its first Moderator. He was frequently in correspondence with those across the ocean, obtaining men and means for the better organization of the young church. In 1707, Makemie and Hampton were imprisoned and Makemie was tried by the infamous Lord Cornbury, in New York, for the crime of preaching the gospel and baptizing a child without his permission. Though finally declared not guilty, he was in the end sentenced to pay costs amounting to about four hundred dollars. The verdict aroused popular indignation. The trial was a severe strain to Makemie, and, after his return home his health gradually failed. He drew up his will April 27th, and it was probated August 4th, 1708. He died in the latter part of July. In his will, he remembered his church at Rehoboth, and deeded it the lot on which the present church stands. The watermill, though dating from his times, appears to have been the property of Colonel Stevens.

The death of Makemie was a blow to the church as a whole, as well as his own particular charge. A worthy successor was soon, however, upon the field at Rehoboth, in the person of Rev. John Henry, who entered upon the charge in the latter part of 1708. He "stood high as a divine and as a citizen, and his descendants have stood well in the community." One of them was for a time the governor of the State. He married Colonel Jenkins' widow, Lady Mary. This lady was greatly endeared to Makemie, and he had in his will directed that, in case his wife should die, Mrs. Jenkins should have charge of their chil-

dren. Rev. and Mrs. Henry had two sons, Robert Jenkins and John Henry, both men of prominence. Colonel Robert Jenkins Henry afterwards became an elder in the Rehoboth church. This church is represented as having ruling elders from the very first, but the names are not mentioned. It is thought that Colonel Stevens may have held this office, but the only ones positively so designated on record are Pierce Bray, in 1701, and Moses Fenton, in 1708. Rev. John Henry was the author of a manuscript volume of about 500 pages entitled "Common Place," containing a defense of the Confession of Faith. It was in existence about 1820, but seems to have been lost. John Henry died in 1717, and the church fell to the charge of Rev. John Hampton, then minister at Snow Hill. In June, 1719, John Clement was ordained to the ministry and settled at Rehoboth. William Stewart was at the same time ordained and placed in charge of the Manokin church. Clement proved unworthy, and was deposed for drunkenness and immorality after only a few months. It was not such an unusual thing in clergymen of that day, sad to say, but it was something that no Presbyterian clergyman could do unpunished. For this reason Clement's name is not included in the list of Rehoboth's ministers. John Hampton of Snow Hill resumed the charge, and, marrying his predecessor's widow, came to Rehoboth to live. His health soon failed and he died in 1722, his widow surviving him until 1744. The grave of the beautiful Mary Hampton is to be seen to-day, with the stone still legible, in a field near Rehoboth, on her old plantation. The remains should be removed to the church where her husband ministered in succession. After this the Rev. William Stewart of the Manokin church of Princess Anne preached at Reho-

both until his death in 1734. Mr. Stewart was an able, energetic man, and had been ordained to the ministry, some years before, in the church he was now called to add to his charge. After his death, Rev. Patrick Glasgow, his successor at Manokin, preached occasionally at Rehoboth, until he left that field in 1741. The old Presbytery of Lewes had been erected in 1735. In 1741 came the division of the Synod between Old and New Sides, and it came with hurtful force upon the weak, struggling churches of the Peninsula; so that in 1745 nearly all of them, including Rehoboth, were vacant. About this time Revs. William Robinson and Samuel Davies came down the Peninsula on a Presbyterian evangelistic tour, and their work was greatly blessed. They held meetings of great fervor in "the churches in Somerset" especially. Of some of these meetings Samuel Davies wrote; "A most glorious display of grace. I never saw such a deep spreading concern in my life. In the extremity of a cold winter, the attendance was numerous and the people unwearied; the indications of distress and joy were plain. Those were the happiest days of my life." No doubt Rehoboth shared in the refreshment of these wonderful meetings, which continued at intervals until 1747. Such was the strengthening of the fields that in 1747 Rehoboth united with Manokin in calling Rev. John Hambleton as pastor. Mr. Hambleton continued in the charge until 1757, but very little can be found on record concerning these years. It appears that Mr. Hambleton also preached at Snow Hill. In one of his communions, as was the custom, he was assisted by another minister, Rev. John Erskin, who received two pounds for his services. Mr. Hambleton attended Synod in 1750. In 1752 Rev. Hugh Henry visited

the field, and he was called as the next pastor of Manokin and Rehoboth in 1758. Nehemiah King and Colonel Robert Jenkins Henry of the Rehoboth session presented the call before Presbytery. Hugh Henry was in no way related to his predecessor John Henry or the latter's son who presented the call. In 1759 Mr. Henry was assisted at communion by the Rev. John Harris. In 1763 Mr. Henry died. In 1764 Rev. Jacob Ker was installed pastor of Manokin and Wicomico, by Presbytery, meeting at Princess Anne, Nov. 3d. Rev. John Miller preached, and Rev. John Harris delivered the charge. Mr. Ker, who was a man of much force of character continued to supply Rehoboth, though not as regular pastor, until 1779. He afterward continued in charge at Princess Anne until his death in 1795. Mr. Ker was a patriot, and showed it in his sermons. He was a friend of Mrs. Anne Holden, Makemie's daughter, and in 1788 she left him twenty pounds, in her will. The Handys of Princess Anne are descendants of Jacob Ker. For a short time in 1796 Rev. John Collins, Mr. Ker's successor, supplied Rehoboth in turn with Rev. Samuel McMaster, who became pastor of the Snow Hill, Pitts Creek and Rehoboth churches in 1779, after supplying them for a year or two. Messrs. Ker and McMaster, the pastors of the revolutionary period, were great friends, and assisted one another at communion seasons. They both preached "political sermons" of a very Whiggish turn, considering it their duty to educate the consciences of their people; and both were held in high esteem therefor. In spite of the disturbed state of the country, it was one of the bright periods of the little church at Rehoboth. While there was a general dearth of religious teachers, yet her wants were supplied. From the diary of

Mary Spence, of Snow Hill, at about this time we find record of Mr. McMaster preaching regularly and administering the communion at Rehoboth. After his marriage Mr. McMaster resided on the old place which today bears his name, about midway between the two extreme points of his charge. He was a member of the General Assembly in 1794 and 1806, being each time placed on the committee on Bills and Overtures. He is described as being in appearance a man of somewhat over medium height and weight, of smooth face, and bald. His eyes were bright and laughing, and his voice and manner were gentle and jovial. He died at his home in 1811, having spent more than half his life in the one charge. A memorial tablet is erected to his memory in the Pitts Creek Presbyterian church at Pocomoke, and his remains were recently removed and interred in the Presbyterian cemetery at that place. Thus passed away a sturdy friend of Rehoboth, and the old church's first historian. How deplorable that this history, compiled doubtless under the oversight of Makemie's daughter, has been lost!

About this period the older members place the eldership of Ralph Milbourne and Stephen Collins. The latter is still celebrated as the "Deaf Elder," and it is said that an account of his life has been in print, but the writer was unable to obtain a copy. The year 1812, while apparently passed without regular preaching at Rehoboth, was one which deeply effected the future of the old church, in witnessing the inauguration of a movement for ministerial education that furnished it with most of its ministers in the days to come.

In May 1813, Rev. Stuart Williamson was installed as pastor over the three churches of Snow Hill, Pitts

Creek and Rehoboth, but he died after a brief illness in 1814. Rev. Calvin Colton is recorded as stated supply from 1815 to 1817. There were also one or two neighboring preachers who occasionally filled the pulpit during the same time.

In July, 1818, Rev. Stephen Saunders was duly ordained and installed as pastor of Snow Hill, Pitts Creek, and Rehoboth churches. He was a native of Connecticut, and possibly the difference in climate and social conditions may have resulted in shortening his stay, for he resigned and returned North in October, 1819.

In April, 1820, Rev. Thomas B. Balch came from the District of Columbia, and was installed pastor of the three churches. He was a young man, in his 27th year, when he entered upon the charge, and was a fine preacher, and a man greatly beloved by his people. He was, however, not at all strong, and a great sufferer from asthma. Those who remember him say he would frequently have to lie down after preaching. It would seem that, during his pastorate, the old Rehoboth church, which had become somewhat dilapidated, was repaired and made quite comfortable. While the congregations were good, the membership remained small. In 1822 Mr. Balch's health became so bad that he was obliged to take a temporary leave of absence. While thus away, Rev. Henry Blatchford, a young Englishman by birth, one of Princeton's first students, came to supply all four of the churches—Snow Hill, Pitts Creek, Rehoboth and Manokin. Mr. Spence describes his sermons as able, pungent, and searching, making very deep impressions. He says "I never knew a minister who gained more rapidly upon the affections of those whom he taught publicly; but especially of those

with whom he mingled in social intercourse. A friend who had known him much longer than I, wrote: "All who knew him loved him." "His remarkable ministry was to continue only a little over three months. He preached his first sermon in June, his last in August, and died Sept. 7, 1822, in the prime of his young manhood. His death stirred and awed the whole community, and the funeral at Princess Anne was attended by an immense throng filled with solemnity and tenderness. An Episcopal clergyman, assisted by two Methodist pastors, conducted the beautiful and impressive ceremonies. His sudden death, while so far away from his father and mother, wife and children and early friends, aroused the sympathies of all, and both the speakers and their hearers wept. One speaker began his address by saying: "It has been, and is, my prayer to die as our brother has died; to be called home while busily engaged doing my Master's work." The beautiful white marble tomb, erected to his memory by the four congregations, is now dark with weather stains, broken, and almost illegible; but the memory of his saintly life will long remain with those to whom he broke the bread of life. It was about this time, with the burning of Dr. Balch's house and library, that the Presbyterian church lost those priceless treasures,—the portraits of Francis Makemie and his wife and the old Rehoboth session book. The only thing we know of the contents of that session book is contained in a note from Rev. A. De Witt, pastor at Lewes in 1837, in which he says: "By an extract taken from the session book of Rehoboth, Somerset county, Md., by the Rev. Joseph Copse, it appears that the Rev. John Thomson was ordained at Lewestown in 1717." This extract was made in 1822. The

present records begin in 1849. A description of the condition of Rehoboth town and church in 1830, or about the close of Dr. Balch's pastorate, is furnished us from the pen of one of our noted journalistic writers, who had spent a part of his boyhood in this county. From it we learn that the little hamlet was fast going to decay. No trace remained of the County jail, built there in 1701. The old tavern was still open, but the place was like a deserted village. The road ran to the bank of the Pocomoke river, where a ferry was still kept up to the opposite shore and to Virginia. The Methodist and Baptist churches had not yet been built, and the old Episcopal church, erected in 1735, and a fine, large edifice, is spoken of already as a "deserted temple," where owl and bat inhabit. It is said its entire congregation could be assembled in a single pew, and service was held in it only once a year. The other brick building, Rehoboth Presbyterian church, was in better repair although not the comfortable structure within that it is today. As at first arranged, the ceiling went up into the gable, only ending in a slight rounded arch, instead of a point. Whether our sturdy ancestors could bear cold better than we, is not known, but it seems likely that they sat and suffered in silence. In later days a remonstrance was raised against the cold draughts that so seriously affected the minister's already delicate health. In consequence, the ceiling was lowered and squared, and, for the time, the two narrow galleries in the ends of the church were boarded up, and left in obscurity, entirely separated from the main room of the church. In this way the building was rendered fairly comfortable, as Irving Spence tells us. The stately, high-backed, four sided pews, and an old-

fashioned pulpit half way up to the ceiling, were still retained, together with some uncouth stoves, burning wood, that not only proved ineffective against cold, but sometimes smoked at such a rate as to destroy the effect of the sermon. The congregation gathered here, which once had filled the church, had now dwindled away to about fifty persons. Death and removal had been busy in this little flock, and to these unfavorable influences were soon to be added the widespread financial distress, and the Old and New school dissension in the church.

Strange to say, the period of about eighteen years which follows has been the one about which it has been most difficult to get satisfactory information. The recollections of the older members are somewhat contradictory. Letters and written records seem to have perished in the flames at various times, and the comparative-unimportance of the once flourishing town adds to the perplexity. The church was now so weakened as not to be included in the calls extended to those who included it among their preaching stations. Sometimes, especially in stormy weather, no service would be held for several months. In spite of this, the neighboring pastors, on both sides, seemed to try to cherish old Rehoboth and frequently preached there, and during at least part of the time, the old church had a minister of its own. The writer is assured that, although the ministers at Pitts Creek, Revs. Cornelius H. Mustard and James J. Graff frequently held services at Rehoboth, the church was rather considered to be attached to the Princess Anne charge. In this way it was under the care of Rev. Robert M. Laird from 1830 to 1832. In 1833, Rev. George W. Kennedy, then a young man 26 years of age, took charge of the Rehoboth church as his sole

field of work, and continued there until the latter part of 1836. At some time within the next few years, three men of great prominence in the church, all afterward Moderators of the General Assembly, visited the old field at various times, in recognition of its true historic position, and preached there. These men were Revs. Robert J. Breckenridge, D.D., LL. D., Albert Barnes, and Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, D.D ; and the older heads still speak of the great throngs that gathered to hear them. About this time the old church became a subject of the controversies of the period, and the notices of it in periodical literature are colored by that fact.

From 1837 to 1841, Rev. Eliphalet Bosworth ministered to the Rehoboth church. He had several other charges, and went about from one to another like a circuit rider. He was a worker, and devoted himself to his churches. Those who remember him say he was a hard driver.

From 1842 to 1849 it appears that Rev. Theodore W. Simpson preached at Rehoboth occasionally and that in this he was assisted at times by Rev. James J. Graff, pastor at Snow Hill and Pitts Creek. At this time the church was in a feeble condition, and if any records were kept they are lost.

In October, 1849, Rev. James L. Vallandigham, D.D., LL. D., began preaching at Manokin and Rehoboth. The little flock at Rehoboth had by this time been reduced to only eight communicants, while the entire congregation numbered between thirty and forty. Captain Whittington Polk and Commodore John Dryden, venerable and beloved men, were the elders; one being 85, the other 80 years of age. February 17, 1850, Dr. Vallandigham was elected pastor, and installed July 4th, following.

Rev. L. H. Christian preached, Rev. Dr. E. Harrison charged the pastor, and Rev. J. M. Olmstead charged the people. Isaac H. Dryden and Wm. C. Whittington were ordained and installed elders July 4th, 1852. In July 1851, the church was repaired at an expense of \$700, of which \$400 was raised by the people, and the remainder collected by the pastor in Baltimore and Philadelphia. The pulpit was lowered and the galleries reopened. Dr. Vallandigham organized a Sabbath school, and taught the Bible class. His ministry was blest to the church in many ways. He left the little church, through his wife's ill health, and was much beloved and regretted. Under his care, the membership had doubled, there being 16 enrolled when he left. Rev. Dr. Vallandigham is to-day an honored member of the Presbytery of New Castle, being the oldest active minister on its roll. His advanced years rest lightly upon him, and he is an interesting and forcible speaker. He has had but the two pastorates—at Rehoboth and Manokin, and at the Head of Christiana Church, where he was pastor for more than 40 years. His ministry has been blessed with great revivals, at one of which over 140 were received on confession of faith at one time. He is a staunch adherent to the Calvinistic doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and declares that the study of the Scriptures and the experiences of his long ministry have only served to confirm his conviction as to their truth.

Dr. Vallandigham left the church in a most favorable condition for growth, but once more political agitation over the slavery question and the approach of war proved serious hindrances. When Rev. Austin C. Heaton, D.D., came to Rehoboth and Manokin in 1855, his vigorous ministry soon improved the condi-

tion of the church, so that within a few years he felt that some young minister might be placed in the charge, and his attention given to the Manokin church alone. Dr. Heaten was a general favorite with the Rehoboth people, and seemed at one time about to form a closer, tenderer tie, by marriage with one of the flock, but the young lady to whom he was betrothed was taken away by death. This lady, Miss Elizabeth Collins, was the daughter of the elder Stephen Collins, to whom we have formerly referred—the child of his old age. The fine silver communion set now used at Rehoboth church was the gift of Miss Collins.

In 1862, a young licentiate, Mr. John R. McKelway, supplied the Rehoboth pulpit for a few months, but was not called. He was followed by Rev. Thomas C. Anderson who became pastor of the Rehoboth church in May, 1862, and continued there until 1864, when he resigned. The church was at this time about at a standstill. There were only about 20 members, and the congregations were quite small. In June, 1864, Emerson Graff Polk was ordained to the eldership, and removing his residence to Pocomoke about that time, he secured the services of Rev. Joseph L. Polk, Ph.D., the pastor of the church there. Dr. Polk continued to officiate at Rehoboth from 1865 until he resigned the charge in 1877, and his pastoral work in the little flock is remembered with gratitude. He was followed by Rev. Littleton P. Bowen, D.D., who continued in charge from 1878 to 1880. Dr. Bowen is spoken of as preaching with the glowing fervor of an evangelist, and if his ministry there had been more extended the church would surely have grown. Moreover, he appreciated the historic position of his charge, and by his careful and

painstaking investigations he has done more than any other to restore Rehoboth to her rightful place. He was followed by Rev. James Conway, D.D., Rehoboth having now been grouped with Pitts Creek by the Presbytery. Dr. Conway remained only until 1882. His oratorical ability and genial Scottish ways are often spoken of by members of the congregation,

These frequent changes, with the vacant intervals, had still further reduced the congregations, so that when Rev. Wm. H. Woolverton came to the charge in 1883, he found it struggling for existence. It must not in any way be wondered at, that the people almost lost hope concerning the future of the church. The church is eight miles from Pocomoke, and to take that ride on a cold day, and then attempt to preach in that great, cold, barn-like structure, to less than a dozen shivering people, was very discouraging, to say the least. The sleepers beneath had rotted away so that the floor was sinking; and the many windows and doors letting in draughts, and the great torrents of cold air that poured down from the galleries, added to the general discomfort. In 1886, when Mr. Woolverton, to the great sorrow of his people, accepted a call to another charge, the condition of things at Rehoboth demanded an entire renovation of the church.

For eighteen months both churches remained without a pastor, and in that period Elder E. G. Polk carried out his plan for the preservation of Rehoboth. He had previously been so earnest and persistent in pleading the cause of his beloved church before Presbytery, and fighting her battles when the Presbytery were almost determined to abandon the field, that the members had begun to call him "that man

from Rehoboth." He went before Presbytery and Synod once more, and set his cause forth in such a way as to obtain from the Synod of Baltimore \$650 for the repairing of the old church, to which the little flock, awakened to new hopes, added the same amount. With this repairs were begun, modernizing the interior of the church, and rendering it thoroughly comfortable. The galleries were removed, ceiling lowered, flooring renewed, a vestibule set off, and the ten windows made memorials to departed officers and members. This was in June 1888, when the writer of this sketch came into the pastoral charge of the two churches of Pitts Creek and Rehoboth. The church was opened and rededicated to the service of God in an all day meeting held July 1, 1888. The pastor was assisted by Rev. Jas. Conway, D.D., one of the former pastors. Dr. Conway preached in the morning, and, in the afternoon, in a graceful and eloquent manner unveiled a memorial tablet to Francis Makemie, set in the wall above the pulpit. The church was crowded to the doors, and some outside were unable to gain admittance. There were then only 20 members, although from that time the congregations began to improve. A growing religious interest led the pastor, in November 1888, to hold a series of gospel meetings. The results were most gratifying, 20 being added to the church. Since then special meetings have been held nearly every year, with good results. Again, in 1893, there was a sweeping revival and 23 were added. In all this period there has been steady growth, the membership reaching 90, with a Sabbath school of 125 members, and a Christian Endeavor Society with 20 members. In April 1894, New Castle Presbytery, meeting at Pocomoke, came down the river by steamer, and visited

the historic spot, listening to a most eloquent address by Rev. Lafayette Marks, D. D., of Wilmington, Del. This is the only time New Castle Presbytery has been there, although the Presbytery of Lewes has frequently met at Rehoboth.

In October 1896, the 213th anniversary of the church was celebrated with appropriate exercises, although a severe storm sadly interfered with the intended program. The interior of the church had been neatly frescoed, the seating grained in oak, and a new carpet laid. Two former pastors, Revs. James L. Vallandigham, D.D., LL. D., and Joseph L. Polk, Ph. D., were present and delivered able and interesting addresses. Dr. Vallandigham is the oldest living pastor of the church. Rev. L. P. Bowen, D. D., sent a letter of congratulation which was afterwards read from the pulpit.

The memorial tablet mentioned, which is thought to be the only one erected to Makemie, reads as follows :

To  
FRANCIS MAKEMIE,  
FATHER OF THE  
AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.  
REHOBOTH.

His First and Favorite Child:

FOUNDED A. D. 1683.

—  
These Sacred Grounds were  
Given by Him.

He said:

“ Everything should tend Heavenward.”

The session of the church at present are Messrs. E. G. Polk, E. S. Broughton and R. W. Adams. Et-

der Alex. Robertson was removed by death this year. The other faithful officers have united in commanding the fidelity and zeal of Mr. Polk, who has now been in the eldership for nearly 33 years, and but for whom the light of this ancient sanctuary would at one time have been extinguished.

The congregation at Rehoboth averages two hundred. Even the members of other churches around it take a pride in its long history, dating from the reign of King Charles Stuart the Second. The members are widely scattered over the country, making a field 9 miles broad by over 20 miles long. Some of the members drive regularly 15 miles to church, and others walk 3 or 4 miles. With two other good sized congregations, the pastor finds a bicycle a necessity in getting from place to place. But the field is manifestly too large for one man; while the people, though showing genuine Presbyterian perseverance and pluck, are too poor to support a pastor unaided. For such reasons the old field comes before our great church with an appeal which should be heard because of its justice. No other church, except that at Jamaica, has documentary evidence of its existence at the early date, 1683, from which Rehoboth begins her ascertained history; and, after careful reading, we feel that Dr. McDonald has failed to make out that the Jamaica church was clearly a Presbyterian church until some years after the time that Makemie had founded Rehoboth. Our great Church believes that a historic value is a real value. Rehoboth had all the points of Presbyterian government—parity of the ministry, ruling elders, and subjection to church courts of appeal—from the beginning. Yet more, she was the Founder's church—his favorite charge. Remembering the great work of him, whose

remains he buried to-day in an unmarked grave across the river from his old charge, will not the great Presbyterian church, out of gratitude, place this little church beyond the fear of neglect, by an endowment, and erect a suitable monument to Francis Makemie there, upon the very ground which he gave to be used by Presbyterians "and none else" forever?

# LIST OF REHOBOTH MINISTERS.

1683—1897.

- 1683-1686—Francis Makemie.  
 1686-1689—William Trail.  
 1690-1708—Francis Makemie.  
 1708-1717—John Henry.  
 1717-1722—John Hampton.  
 1723-1734—William Stewart.  
 1735-1741—Patrick Glascow.  
 1747-1757—John Hambleton.  
 1758-1763—Hugh Henry.  
 1764-1779—Jacob Ker.  
 1779-1811—Samuel McMaster.  
 1796 —John Collins.  
 1813-1814—Stuart Williamson.  
 1815-1817—Calvin Colton.  
 1818-1819—Stephen Saunders.  
 1820-1829—Thomas B. Balch, D.D.  
 1822 —Henry Blatchford.  
 1830-1832—Robert M. Laird.  
 1833-1836—George W. Kennedy, D.D.  
 1837-1841—Eliphelet Bosworth.  
 1842-1849—Theodore W. Simpson.  
 1849-1853—James L. Vallandigham, D.D., LL. D.  
 1855-1861—Austin C. Heaton, D.D.  
 1862-1864—Thomas C. Anderson.  
 1865-1877—Joseph L. Polk, Ph. D.  
 1878-1880—Littleton P. Bowen, D.D.

*List of Rehoboth Ministers.—Continued.*

1881-1882—James Conway, D.D.

1883-1886—William H. Woolverton.

1888-1897—John Simonson Howk, D.D.

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