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HISTORY  
OF THE  
PRESBYTERY OF NEW CASTLE,

From its Organization, March 13, 1717, to 1888.

BY

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# HISTORY

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## PRESBYTERY OF NEW CASTLE

From its Organization, March 13th, 1717, to 1786,

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The Presbytery of Philadelphia was constituted in 1705 or 6, and was, for a number of years, the only Presbytery, and the highest ecclesiastical Court of the Presbyterian Church in this country. On the 21st of September, 1716, this Presbytery unanimously resolved to separate its members into four Presbyteries, and out of them to constitute a higher body to be called a Synod. Accordingly the Presbyteries of Philadelphia, Long Island, Snowhill, and New Castle were constituted, and with the exception of Snowhill, were shortly after organized—the Presbytery of Long Island covering New York, that of Philadelphia embracing New Jersey and a part of Pennsylvania, and that of New Castle extending its jurisdiction over Delaware, Maryland and a portion of Pennsylvania.

On the 13th of March, 1717, in the town of New Castle, State of Delaware, the Presbytery of New Castle was organized. The members present were James Anderson of New Castle, George Gillespie of Head of Christiana, Robert Witherspoon of Apoquinimy, afterwards known as Drawyers, and David Evans of Welsh Tract, now called Pencader, Ministers; and David Miller from New Castle, John Steel from Head of Christiana, and Wm. Williams from Welsh Tract, Ruling Elders. Daniel McGill and Hugh Conn, Ministers, were absent. The Rev. James Anderson was elected Moderator, and the Rev. David Evans, Clerk.

And here it may not be inappropriate to present brief sketches of the men whose names appear first on the roll of the ancient and venerable Presbytery of New Castle.

Mr. Anderson was born in Scotland in 1678, ordained by the Presbytery of Irvine in 1708, and arrived in this country in 1709. He took up his residence in New Castle and became pastor of that church; and for a time also supplied vacancies in Kent and Sussex counties. He was pastor for a short time in New York City, and afterwards at Donegal, and died July 16, 1740. While in New York he had a violent quarrel with some of his people, and his character was bitterly assailed by his enemies, but Dr. Rodgers testifies that he was a "graceful and popular preacher, and a worthy man."

George Gillespie was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1683, and educated in the University of that city. On the 6th of June, 1711, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Glasgow, and in the Spring of 1712, came to this country. In the spring of 1713 he became pastor of Head of Christiana church. Here he labored faithfully and successfully till his death, January 2, 1760. He was a man of talents, learning, and piety, and during his long pastorate of forty-seven years exercised a most salutary influence, not only on his own congregation, but also throughout the bounds of the Presbytery. His descendants residing in Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, occupy honorable and useful positions in society.

Robert Witherspoon was born in Scotland, came to this country in 1713, and on the 13th of May, 1714 was ordained and installed as pastor at Apoquinimy. His pastorate was brief, as he died in May 1718.

David Evans was born in Wales, but came to this country when quite a youth, and was educated here. In 1713 he graduated at Yale College, and having received a unanimous call to Welsh Tract, accepted, and was ordained and installed there November 3d, 1714. He remained there as pastor till 1720, and afterwards supplied several different churches in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and died in 1751. He was a man of great zeal and energy, but somewhat eccentric, in consequence of which his comfort and usefulness as a minister were impaired. From the organization of the Presbytery till the fall of 1721 he served as Stated Clerk.

Daniel McGill, of Patuxent, and Hugh Conn, of Patapsco, were not present at the first meeting of the Presbytery. Mr. Mc-

Gill received a call from Patuxent or Marlborough while in England, and came to this country in 1713. There, and at several other places in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware, he labored for brief periods, and died in New Castle county, Delaware, February 10th, 1724. It is said that "he was a valuable member of Synod, a good preacher, and a learned man."

Hugh Conn was born in Ireland, and educated at the University of Glasgow. He came to this country in 1715, accepted a call from the people of Patapsco in Baltimore county, Maryland, and was ordained and installed in October of the same year, the Rev. Messrs. McGill, Anderson, and Gillespie officiating. This field of labor he left in September, 1719, and took charge of the church now known as Bladensburg. He died very suddenly, while preaching a funeral sermon, June 28, 1752.

With regard to the lives and characters of the elders who were present at that first meeting of the Presbytery, we have been unable to obtain any information; we will, however, state one fact of interest in that connection. Quite a number of the descendants of the elder, John Steel, who represented Head of Christiana church on that occasion belong to that church now; two of them are elders, one a deacon, and several others, male and female, are active and efficient members.

But little business was brought before the Presbytery at its first meeting. There was one case of discipline presented—that of Andrew VanDike, charged with having, contrary to law, married his deceased brother's wife. After some discussion, the further consideration of the matter was postponed to the next meeting of the Presbytery.

In accordance with an earnest request from the people of North East, the Presbytery enjoined upon each minister present to spend one Sabbath with that people before the next stated meeting.

It was resolved that hereafter the meetings of Presbytery should be opened with a sermon, and the Moderator was appointed to preach the opening sermon at the next meeting on the subject of the Being of God.

The second meeting of the Presbytery was held at New Castle, on the 12th of September, 1717. The same ministers were present,

and, with the exception of Mr. Williams, the same elders that were in attendance at the first meeting. The Moderator preached on the subject assigned him—the Being of God. The case of Andrew VanDike, who had married his deceased brother's wife, was taken up, and referred for final decision to the Synod. The Synod, in session the following week in Philadelphia, unanimously decided that such marriages were unlawful. The people of North East were again kindly remembered, and Presbytery recommended to the several members to supply them as often as their convenience and circumstances would allow. It was ordered that all the ministers endeavor to keep a session, and a session-book in their respective congregations. Mr. Gillespie was appointed to preach the opening sermon at the next meeting; the subject assigned him was, God is a Spirit.

The third meeting of the Presbytery, which was a *pro re nata* meeting, was held September 18, 1717, in Philadelphia, during the sessions of the Synod. The same ministers were present that were in attendance at the last meeting; and the following elders: Alexander White, Elias Naudaine, and Peter Watkins. The Rev. John Thomson was received and enrolled as a member. He was a man of mark in his day; "able, learned, judicious and evangelical," the author of several books that evinced his soundness in the faith, and his ability as a writer. A call from a church in New York City, to the Rev. James Anderson to become pastor, was laid before the Presbytery, and after some discussion, the decision of the matter was referred to the Synod. The fourth meeting, which was also *pro re nata*, was held at New Castle, on the 24th of the same month. The same ministers were present as at the last meeting, but no elders. The people of New Castle asked for supplies for their pulpit, their late pastor having removed to the city of New York, and Mr. Robert Cross, a probationer under the care of the Presbytery, was directed to supply them, giving, however, every fourth Sabbath to the people of Kent county.

We have thus given, in full, the proceedings of the Presbytery of New Castle during the first year of its existence; henceforth we will present only matters of special interest that came before that body.

During the thirteen succeeding years the following ministers were enrolled as members of the Presbytery: Samuel Young, received September 23, 1718; Robert Cross, ordained and installed as pastor at New Castle, and enrolled March 17, 1719; John Orme, received September 23, 1721; Henry Hook, May 2, 1722; Wm. Stewart, September 22, 1722; Robert Laing, April 10, 1723; Thomas Evans, ordained and installed pastor at Pencader, and enrolled May 9, 1723; Alexander Hutchinson, ordained and installed pastor of Bohemia and Broad Creek, and enrolled June 6, 1723; Thomas Craighead, January 28, 1723. At the next meeting of the Presbytery, February 25, 1723, Mr. Craighead accepted a call from White Clay Creek church, and on the 22d of September following was installed pastor. Adam Boyd was ordained and installed at Octorara, and enrolled as a member of the Presbytery, October 13, 1724; Joseph Houston, ordained and installed at Elk River, and enrolled October 15, 1724; Archibald McCook, licensed September 13, 1726, and ordained "at Kent Supra Delaware," and enrolled June 7, 1727; James Anderson was again received as a member of the Presbytery, July 25, 1727, and having accepted a call from Donegal church, was installed there the last Wednesday of August following; Hugh Stevenson, licensed September 13, 1726, and ordained and installed as pastor at Snowhill in 1728; Samuel Gelston, received August 27, 1728; John McKinsty, received June 10, 1730.

Wm. McMillan was licensed September 22, 1724; John Tennent, September, 1729; and Robert Cathcart, September 3, 1730.

Nearly all these ministers were originally from either Scotland or Ireland.

In all the ordinations we have here recorded, the following custom was observed: Immediately before the service, a minister of the Presbytery went to the door of the church and made proclamation that if any person had anything to object against the ordaining of the candidate, he should make it known at once to the Presbytery; no one objecting, the candidate was solemnly set apart with fasting prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. A minister, before appointed, presided and preached the ordination sermon, but no mention is made of a charge to either pastor or people.

The names of the following elders also appear on the minutes as attending the meetings of Presbytery during that period: Sylvester Garland, David Evans, Isaac Vigers, Alexander Bell, Joshua Story, James Stodart, Thomas January, Archibald Edmonstone, James Abraham, Robert Finney, Robert Gordon, Robert Linton, James Parry, John David, Thomas Odell, Edward Holmes, Archibald Murphey, John Montgomery, Archibald Smith, Robert Nelson, Peter Bouchelle, Thomas Kyle, Thomas Golden, Hans Hanson, John McDowel, Roger Lawson, David Lawson, John Cochran, Thomas Hogatt, John Hall, John Campbell, Wm. McMahon, Moses McKinley, James Donald, Arthur Parks, Jacob King, Andrew Wallace, David Howel, Andrew Steel, Thomas Craig, David Alexander, John Devore, John Brevard, James Alexander, James Galt, Francis Alexander, Carrol Dushean, James Wallace, John Matthews, John McGill, Cornelius King, John Kilpatrick, James Alexander, Patrick Campbell, James Whitehill, Thomas Mason, Ephraim Moor, Hugh Cowan, John Thompson, Thomas Millhall, John Latham, James Young, Jonathan Evans, Adam Rankin, Arnold Basset, George Craig, Hugh Scott, Justus Evans, John Matthias, James Galbreath, Wm. Emmet, John Cross, James Smith, Peter Highgate, Philip Belville.

The following is a brief summary of the proceedings of the Presbytery during the period referred to—from the Spring of 1718 to the Spring of 1731. At each meeting very urgent supplications for supplies were received from the many vacancies within the extensive bounds of the Presbytery, and these were promptly responded to. All the pastors were required to spend a number of Sabbaths every year in supplying these vacancies, so that they might have the Gospel preached among them at least once a month, and oftener if possible.

Candidates for the ministry were carefully examined; all the usual written exercises were exacted, and also extemporaneous trials of their ability as preachers of the Word, and as soon as they were licensed, they were assigned to some of the vacant fields of the Presbytery.

During this period the following churches were organized: Elk River, or Upper Elk, now called the Rock, in 1720; Lower

Brandywine, first known as "the Presbyterian Meeting in Birmingham," in 1720; White Clay Creek in 1720; Red Clay Creek in 1722; Upper Branches of Elk, now called New London, in 1728; Christiana Bridge sometime between 1730 and 1738.

Cases of discipline were sometimes brought before the Presbytery; strife between a pastor and some of his people, or between some of the people and the Session, or a contention in regard to the organization of a new church lest an old one not far distant might be weakened. These were sometimes settled by the Presbytery, and sometimes carried by reference or appeal to the Synod, but were ultimately adjusted without serious injury to the churches.

The first book of the Records of the Presbytery, from which we gather these facts, commencing with its first meeting, March 13, 1717, closes with a meeting held at Head of Christiana church, April 14, 1731. The second book, containing the proceedings from that time till May 29, 1759, is irrecoverably lost; from other sources we gather the following items in regard to the proceedings of the Presbytery during that period of 28 years.

The following ministers were enrolled as members of the Presbytery: Wm. Orr, ordained in 1731, and settled at Lower Octorara, afterwards called Nottingham; Benjamin Campbell, ordained in 1733; James Martin, settled as pastor at Lewes, in 1734; Hugh Carlisle, received in 1735. In 1735, the Rev. Messrs. Hook, Jamison, Stevenson and Martin made request of the Synod to be set off from the Presbytery of New Castle and erected into a Presbytery by themselves. The request was granted, and they were ordered to meet at Lewes, Delaware, on the 19th of November following, and be constituted as the Presbytery of Lewestown, which was accordingly done.

In 1736 Francis Allison was ordained and installed as pastor of the Church of New London. He was an accomplished scholar, an able preacher of the Gospel, and a popular and successful teacher. In 1756 the degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred upon him by the University of Glasgow, an honor never before conferred upon any of our ministers. In 1738 Charles Tennent was ordained and installed pastor of White Clay Creek.

In June 1741 occurred what is called the Great Schism, and

as a result of it New Castle Presbytery was divided. A new Presbytery was organized, at first called the Presbytery of Londonderry, but afterwards, New Castle—known as the 2d, or New Side Presbytery of New Castle. It was constituted on the 2d day of June 1741, and was composed of the following members: Samuel Blair, Alexander Craghead, David Alexander and Charles Tennent; with directions to meet at White Clay Creek on the 30th of June, and be opened with a sermon by Mr. Blair. It was accordingly organized at the time and place appointed.

The following ministers were afterward added to its roll: John Blair, ordained December 27, 1742, as pastor of Middle Spring, Rocky Spring and Big Spring in Cumberland Co., Pennsylvania. John Rogers, ordained March 16, 1746, was installed pastor at St. George's, where he ably and successfully labored for sixteen years, and built up a large and flourishing church. He was afterwards pastor in New York City, and died there in 1811, in the 84th year of his age. Dr. Rogers was Moderator of the First General Assembly of our Church.

Robert Smith, ordained March 26, 1751, and installed pastor of Pequea and Leacock in Pennsylvania. Hugh Henry ordained in 1751, and installed pastor of Monokin, Rehoboth and Wicomico. Moses Tuttle, received in 1756; his field of labor was Kent County, Delaware. George Duffield, ordained March, 1756, and installed at Carlisle and Big Spring in 1759. John Roan in 1744, Alexander Cumming in 1746, and John Hoge in 1753 were licensed, but ordained and settled within the bounds of other Presbyteries.

The following ministers also were connected with the New Side Presbytery of New Castle: Samuel Finley, Samuel Davies, Andrew Stirling, Andrew Bay, James Campbell, Alexander Hutchinson, James Davenport, Evander Morrison, John Todd, Robert Henry, John Wright and Hugh McAden. Samuel Davies and the Blairs and Finleys were men of talents and learning, able preachers of the Gospel, and popular and successful teachers. Davies was, for a short time, President of Princeton College, and on his death was succeeded by Samuel Finley.

During these years the following accessions were made to the roll of the Old Side Presbytery: John Steel, who was ordained in

1743, and labored for a time at New London. Hector Allison, ordained in 1746, and settled for a few years at Drawyers. John Hamilton who was ordained in 1746, and installed at Monokin and Rehoboth over that portion of the congregations that adhered to the "Old Side"; John Dick, ordained November 12, 1746, and installed pastor, at New Castle and Drawyers, of the "Old Side" portion of those congregations; James Finley ordained in 1752, and installed pastor of the Rock in Cecil County, Maryland; John Brown, ordained October 11th, 1753, and settled in Virginia; William McKennan, ordained December 17, 1755, and installed pastor of Red Clay Creek, where he remained for more than fifty years; Mr. McKennan lived to an advanced age, esteemed and honored in the community. His descendants have occupied high and honorable positions in the country, one of them having been a member of the cabinet of President Harrison, and another, the Hon. Wm. McKennan, being now a Circuit Judge of the United States Courts. Alexander McDowell was received into the Presbytery in 1743. He was for many years Principal of the Synod's Academy located first at New London, Pa., afterwards at Newark, Delaware. Matthew Wilson was for some time his assistant. Timothy Griffith was enrolled in 1753, having in that year been ordained and installed pastor at Pencader. John Miller was received in 1756, and settled as pastor of Dover and Smyrna, where he remained till his death in 1719. He was the father of the Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller, so long one of the Professors in the Theological Seminary at Princeton.

As the Records of both these Presbyteries are lost, we have been unable to give the names of the elders who were in attendance, during this period, at their several meetings. It is also probable that the names of some of the ministers who were members have been omitted. Without access to the minutes of the Presbyteries, any account of their proceeding must necessarily be meagre and unsatisfactory.

The schism of 1741 was healed in 1758, and by an act of the Synod of New York and Pennsylvania, May 17, 1759, it was ordered that the First and Second Presbyteries of New Castle be united in one Presbytery, to meet for the first time at West

Nottingham, on the last Tuesday of May of that year. Accordingly on the 29th of May, 1759, the Presbytery met at West Nottingham. There were present Adam Boyd, John Blair, James Finley, and Samuel Finley, ministers; and John Smith, Wm. Wallace, and John Kirkpatrick, elders. The absent members were Charles Tennent, John Rogers, Daniel Thane, Andrew Bay, Wm. McKennan, Alexander McDowell, Hector Allison, Andrew Sterling, Hugh McAden, Alexander Hutcheson, George Gillespie, and John Ewing. The Presbytery was opened with a lecture and a sermon by Mr. John Strain, a candidate under the care of the Presbytery. Mr. Boyd was chosen Moderator, and Mr. Blair, Clerk. The lecture and sermon of Mr. Strain were approved, and his other examinations proving satisfactory, he was licensed to preach the Gospel. Mr. Strain was a very popular preacher and immediately received calls from a number of congregations. These he retained for some time in his hands, and then returned them to the Presbytery, and requested to be ordained as an evangelist. To this the Presbytery assented, and on the 17th of December, 1760, he was ordained to the full work of the Gospel ministry.

The brethren of the two Presbyteries so long separated, being now united in one body, began at once cordially and harmoniously to labor together, in efforts to repair the injury their strife and separation had made. This separation had not been caused by any difference of views, either as to doctrine or church government. "It was the result of alienation of feeling produced by the controversies relative to the revival." This being the case, and time, the healer, having calmed the feeling excited by the controversy, a reconciliation was easily accomplished.

The principal business of the Presbytery for the succeeding fourteen years, from 1759 to 1773, was the examination and licensing of candidates for the ministry; the ordaining and installing of pastors, and supplying the numerous vacancies that at every meeting supplicated aid, either by sending their licentiates, or by requiring the settled pastors to give a considerable portion of their time to this important work.

On March 3, 1761, John Carmichael was licensed to preach, and on the 22d of April following, was ordained to the full work

of the Gospel ministry. On the 2d of March, 1763, James Hunt was received from Hanover Presbytery, and afterwards installed as pastor of Little Brittain. January 17, 1764, James Davidson, a candidate from Ireland, was taken under the care of the Presbytery. Samuel Blair was licensed April 19, 1765, and ordained October 30th, of the same year.

On page 113 of the third Book of the Records of New Castle Presbytery, under date May 25, 1765, is the following minute: "The Rev'd Synod of New York and Philadelphia, having erected those members of the Presbyteries of New Castle and Donegal who are on the east side of Susquehanna, into a new Presbytery by the name of the Presbytery of Lancaster, and appointed their first meeting on the 25th of May, 1765, at the First Presbyterian church, in the city of Philadelphia, in consequence of which act of Synod, the Presbytery of Lancaster met at the place, and on the day aforesaid, at 6 o'clock, A. M." The names of those present are given, and it is recorded that Mr. McDowell was chosen Moderator, and Mr. Hunt, Clerk.

On page 135, we find the following note appended to the record of the proceedings of the Presbytery at a meeting held at St. Georges, April 16, 1766: "Here end the minutes of Lancaster Presbytery, begun page 113, and continued this far, containing the acts and proceedings of said Presbytery, from May the 25th, 1765, until April 18, 1766." From these minutes it seems that the Presbytery of New Castle was for about a year in a state of suspended animation, or existed for that time under another name.

On page 136 of the same book of Records is the following minute: "The Synod of New York and Philadelphia, having at their last meeting dissolved the late Lancaster Presbytery, and erected the late Presbytery of New Castle as they were formerly, and appointed their first meeting at the time and place to which the late Lancaster Presbytery had adjourned. The Presbytery of New Castle accordingly met at Boyd's Meetinghouse, July 29, 1766," and was thus resuscitated, and has ever since existed under that name.

January 7, 1766, the Rev. Elihu Spencer was received from the Presbytery of New Brunswick, and afterwards installed pastor

of St. George's. John Craighead, John McCreary, Joseph Alexander, and James Boyd were licensed July 31, 1766. Wm. Foster was licensed April 23, 1767, and ordained October 19th of the following year. August 11, 1768, Josiah Lewis and Hezekiah Baloh were licensed to preach the Gospel, and on the 19th of October following, Sampson Smith was received and enrolled as a member. On the next day Daniel McClelland and John Beard were also enrolled. April 19, 1769, Joseph Smith was ordained to the Gospel ministry; and on the 10th of May following, John McCreary was ordained and installed pastor of the churches of White Clay Creek and Head of Christiana, where he faithfully labored till his death, June 18, 1800. August 16, 1769, Joseph Smith was installed pastor of the churches of New Castle and Christiana Bridge. October 19, 1769, James Anderson, a licentiate of the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, was received, and on the 26th of June, 1771, was ordained and installed pastor of the church of Middletown. April 21, 1770, James Wilson and Daniel Jones were licensed, and July 31, of the same year, John Woodhull was ordained and installed pastor of the churches of Lancaster and Leacock; and Josiah Lewis was ordained and sent as a missionary to Carolina. October 16, 1770, John Clark was received and enrolled. April 19, 1771, James Latta was received and enrolled as a member of the Presbytery. October 14, 1771, James Wilson was ordained and installed at New London. May 23, 1772, Mr. Aken was received and enrolled as a member of Presbytery; and on the 23d of June of the same year, James Power and Samuel Dougal were licensed to preach the Gospel. December 23, 1772, Samuel Stanhope Smith, Nathaniel Irwin, and Robert Davidson were licensed. June 23, 1773, Thomas Smith was ordained and installed pastor of St. George's and the Forest.

On the 10th of August, 1773, the Presbytery met in Wilmington to adjust the difficulties that had occurred in connection with the settlement of the Rev. Joseph Smith in that city. The proceedings of that meeting are the last that are recorded in the third book of the Records of the Presbytery. The fourth book of the Records of the Presbytery properly commences where the third book closes, August 12, 1773. The record however is incomplete,

and as a preface to the book we find the following note: "This Book ought to begin with recording the proceedings of the Presbytery, which adjourned the 12th of August, 1773, to meet at Faggs Manor on the fourth Tuesday of October following; but the troublesome times, war and distress, which took place both in Church and State afterwards, greatly deranged all affairs, civil and religious, for many years, and the enemy marching through the Presbytery's bounds occasioned the loss of their old Records, and many of their running minutes of that distressing day are dropped aside, or turned fugitive with the enemy and disaffected." Owing to the reasons here suggested the reports of the proceedings of the Presbytery from 1773 to 1786 are very imperfect. In several instances the Presbytery failed to meet at the time and place appointed. In some cases where they did meet the report of their proceedings is recorded only in part, in others it is entirely missing. Ministers and people alike were in sympathy with those who were struggling for the independence of the country; many of them were in the army; hence congregations were weakened, services were irregular, and sometimes altogether suspended. Under these circumstances growth and prosperity could not be expected. From the incomplete record of the proceedings of the Presbytery, during this period, we find little that is of special interest. On the 9th of August, 1774, Mr. Brooks was licensed, and on the 25th of October of the same year, John McMillan. On the 25th of October, 1775, it was resolved, in view of the "unhappy situation of public affairs, to observe the last Thursday of November as a day of fasting and prayer." May 22, 1776, Samuel Eakin was received from the First Presbytery of Philadelphia, and James Power was ordained. January 12, 1780, Wm. R. Smith was ordained and installed pastor of the Second church of Wilmington. August 22, 1781, Messrs. Daniel Jones, John E. Smiley, and James Dunlap were ordained. April 23, 1782, Mr. Dunlap was dismissed to the Presbytery of Redstone. Mr. Finley applied to the Presbytery for a dissolution of his pastoral relation; the Presbytery refused, and he appealed to the Synod, and May 17, 1782, the Synod released him; and the Presbytery dismissed him to the Presbytery of Redstone, April 26, 1785. Samuel Barr was ordained May 19, 1785, and Mr. Burton, December 13th of the same year.

A few remarks of a general character will close this sketch.

A good many cases of discipline are recorded. Charges of various kinds and degrees against private members were brought before the Presbytery, either directly or by appeal from Sessions. These were carefully investigated, impartially tried, and where conviction was the result, the prescribed penalty was inflicted.

On several occasions also charges were tabled against ministers, some comparatively unimportant, others of a very serious character. One minister was rebuked in open Presbytery for solemnizing a clandestine marriage—uniting a couple without the consent of parents, and contrary to their known wishes. Another minister was censured for marrying a lady who was not a member of the Church. He stated in vindication that he knew beforehand her religious views and feelings, and that shortly after marriage she united with the Church. This was regarded as a mitigation of the offence, but he was censured notwithstanding.

Against several ministers very serious charges were alleged, and long and tedious trials held, resulting in rebuke, suspension, or deposition from the ministry. We record no names in this connection, as some of the ministers afterwards appeared before the Presbytery, professed deep penitence for their sins, and were reinstated in the ministry. The descendants also of some of them, in various parts of our country, occupy positions of respectability and usefulness.

The subject of education, especially with a view to the preparation of young men for the Gospel ministry, early received the attention of the Presbytery. An academy was established at New London, Pa., afterwards removed to Newark, Delaware, which was for a time under the care of the Synod. It still exists and is a flourishing institution, but it is not now under ecclesiastical control. Its teachers however have always been Presbyterians, and a majority of its Board of Trustees belong to that denomination. Collections in aid of the College of New Jersey were taken up in many of the churches; and measures looking to the establishment of a Theological Department in that institution were considered in the Presbytery. In 1770 the Presbytery adopted a “plan for the education of poor and pious youth for the work of the ministry.” It

was a Presbyterian Education Society. The money needed to carry out the plan was to be raised by an assessment of a certain amount on each minister, and a certain larger amount on each congregation. Each young man aided by it was, after licensure, to spend at least one year in the service of the Presbytery supplying vacancies. If any young man aided by the Society should fail to enter the ministry he was to refund the money he had received.

The adequate support of the ministry ; aid to feeble congregations in the erection of church edifices ; assistance to the poor on whose behalf application was sometimes made, received a share of attention, but especially the subject of Home Missions. The deep interest which these brethren evinced in regard to the feeble churches under their care and the earnest effort made to supply them, and to organize new churches wherever there was a promising opening, was remarkable and was in the highest degree commendable. In this respect they excelled us, their successors, though our facilities for this important work are far superior to theirs.

The following custom at an early period established by New Castle Presbytery and still continued, is perhaps worthy of imitation by other Presbyteries. When a pastor dies his brethren of the Presbytery supply the pulpit without charge for six months, the salary for that time being continued and paid to the family of the deceased.

From this brief and imperfect survey of the first seventy years of New Castle Presbytery, we find the following peculiarities characterizing the body :

1st. *Rigid discipline* ; so rigid that on several occasions the Synod reversed or modified its decisions on account of their severity. 2d. *Due preparation for the work of the Gospel ministry always required* ; though the demand for preachers to supply the numerous vacant churches was urgent, yet candidates were not hurried into the work, but were carefully examined as to their scholarship and aptness to teach ; all the trials for licensure now required, and even more were exacted of them. 3d. *Careful scrutiny of the moral and religious character of those who sought admission into the body*. Men who brought from the " old country," credentials that seemed entirely satisfactory, were in several instances found to be

utterly unworthy; whereupon the Presbytery resolved that something more than credentials should be required, and that other tests should be instituted to try the worthiness of those who might apply. 4th. *Stern fidelity to doctrinal standards.* Licentiates were required to sign this formula before sent forth to labor in the churches: "I do own the Westminster confession of Faith, in the presence of these witnesses, together with the larger and shorter catechisms, and the directory thereto annexed, to be the confession of my faith, and the rule of life and manners, according to the word of God." This formula or one substantially the same was subscribed in open Presbytery, not only by licentiates, but also by ordained ministers, at the time of their reception and enrollment as members of the Presbytery. 5th. *True revivals appreciated, and earnestly sought.* The opposition that was made to the revival of 1741 was not to the work of grace itself, but to the excesses connected therewith, which might have been avoided, which ought to have been avoided, and which greatly marred the work. 6th. *A missionary spirit—a desire and an effort to lengthen the cords of Zion, and strengthen her stakes—to organize new churches, and to build up and consolidate those already organized.* In this noble work, the fathers of the Presbytery spent much time and labor, and made many and great sacrifices. And God blessed their work, and in the widely extended field in which they so diligently labored are now scores of large and flourishing churches where a pure Gospel is preached, sinners brought to a saving knowledge of the truth, and the people of God built up in faith and holiness.

In all the ways in which they labored for the glory of God and the prosperity of Zion, let us, their successors, imitate their example. Faithful in the exercise of discipline, loyal to our noble doctrinal standards, pure and holy as becometh those who bear the vessels of the Lord, deeply feeling our dependence on the influences of the Holy Spirit for success in our work, and earnestly seeking those influences, may we diligently labor in the fields which they so faithfully cultivated, and transmit to our successors the precious inheritance we received from them—the founders and fathers of our venerable and honored Presbytery.

# HISTORY

OF THE

## Presbytery of New Castle

FROM 1786 TO 1888.

BY

REV. SAMUEL A. GAYLEY, D, D.,

COLORA, MARYLAND.

HISTORICAL SKETCH  
OF THE  
PRESBYTERY OF NEW CASTLE,  
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[The previous pages of this narrative (down to the year 1786) are omitted here because Dr. Vallandigham's sketch covers the same period of time, and Dr. Gayley now continues the history from where the other terminates (1786) down to the present time (1888).—PUBLISHERS.]

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During this period that we have considered, from the organization of the Presbytery until 1786, the ministers were zealous in missionary labors for the extension of the church; and as many ministers came from Scotland and Ireland, they carefully scrutinized their moral and religious character before receiving them. They demanded other evidence as to their character and standing than certificates of the Presbyteries from which they came before being received. They had found, by sad experience, that Presbyteries had given certificates of good standing to unworthy men.

Scarce as ministers were and great as was the demand for them, Presbytery did not lower the standard of qualifications. Much time

and attention were devoted to the examinations and trials of candidates for licensure.

After the close of the war, attention was chiefly directed to gather the scattered congregations, and to furnish them with regular ministrations; and as a consequence of the troublous times, religion was in a low condition. The ministers zealously endeavored to revive spiritual life in the churches.

In 1786, although the original territory of the Presbytery had been curtailed by the erection of the Presbyteries of Lewes and Donegal, its bounds were extensive. It covered the Peninsula southward as far as Smyrna, Delaware. It embraced the whole of Chester and Lancaster Counties, part of Dauphin and York, and northward it included Berks and Schuylkill Counties in Pennsylvania. The churches in York County were afterwards attached to the Presbytery of Baltimore. The churches of Deer Creek and Bethel, in Harford County, Maryland, belonged to the Presbytery which, with the churches in York County, were set off to the Presbytery of Baltimore. All these churches, at the request of the Presbytery of Baltimore, were, by the General Assembly in 1799, re-attached to the Presbytery of New Castle. In 1825, Bethel Church and its Pastor, Rev. George Morrison, and Deer Creek Church and Pastor, Rev. William Finny, became connected with the Presbytery of Baltimore, and in 1828 were again set off to the Presbytery of New Castle. In 1816, mention is made in the Records of the Presbytery of Lancaster, and a Mr. Boyd was dismissed to its care. There is no further notice of it. In 1765, a Presbytery of Lancaster had been organized, embracing those members of Donegal and New Castle Presbyteries east of the Susquehanna, but after a year's existence, was dissolved. From the above reference, there must have been a Presbytery again constituted by that name, but I am unable to find any further notice of it.

In 1786, the Presbytery comprised nineteen ministers and thirty-four churches. But few of the churches had settled pastors; a number had stated supplies. The remainder were supplied by licentiates and the members of Presbytery. The majority of the churches were unable to support settled pastors. In those days it was the custom for one minister to have charge of two or more churches, which often were widely separated; but even the feeblest churches were regularly supplied. Presbytery, at each session, made out a list of supplies for all vacant churches, and those appointed were held to strict accountability as to the discharge of their duty. By this system of supply, the feeble churches were not only kept alive, but nursed into self-support. The supplies of vacant churches were not only required to preach, but to catechise. Presbytery exercised strict pastoral supervision over all

vacant congregations. All ministers were required to be engaged in ministerial work, and were only excused on the presentation of sufficient reasons. The Records show that each pastor, by appointment of Presbytery, spent on an average six Sabbaths each year in supplying vacant churches.

At the formation of the General Assembly in 1788, the members of the Presbytery were, Robert Smith, D. D., William McKennan, Colin McFarquhar, James Latta, D. D., John McCreary, Alexander Mitchell, Thomas Reid, James Anderson, Thomas Smith, Daniel Jones, William R. Smith, Nathaniel W. Sample, James Munro, John E. Finley, John Burton and Nathan Grier. The members present at the last meeting of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia were, James Anderson, John Burton and Nathan Grier.

The Presbytery, as a body, was characterized by a zealous missionary spirit from its organization; with great fidelity, energy, and self-denial, did it cultivate the field within its bounds. In that day there was no central treasury from which to draw funds for the prosecution of domestic mission work. It had to be done by the members of Presbytery, which appointed from time to time two of its members, who were frequently pastors, to itinerate for a certain period in the destitute places within its bounds; during the time of their itinerancy their churches were supplied by members of Presbytery. The missionary spirit of the Presbytery is indicated by the adoption of the following minute in 1832: "Resolved, that every member of New Castle Presbytery is a missionary, and under obligations to Jesus Christ and the Church to labor a portion of his time in the destitute places of the Presbytery as well as among the people of his own charge." Nor was this resolution a dead letter, but it was faithfully carried out by the members of Presbytery. When we consider the extent of territory embraced in the Presbytery, and the long journeys to be made, and usually on horseback, to supply the vacancies and to preach in the destitute places, and generally without remuneration, we cannot but admire the earnest and self-denying spirit of the ministers; they were thoroughly consecrated men. By this system of missionary labor, congregations were gathered, churches organized, which became in time, self-supporting and influential.

In order to conduct the Home Missionary Work with greater efficiency, Presbytery, in 1817, constituted itself into a Home Missionary Society to raise funds for mission work among the different congregations. So in 1831, at its spring meeting, a committee was appointed to visit the several congregations for the purpose of forming missionary societies for the raising of funds, which were to be sent to the Treasurer of the Home Mission Fund of Presbytery, to be applied

by its direction. Such societies were formed in most of the congregations.

At the same time Presbytery became deeply interested in the work of Foreign Missions. At the same meeting a communication was received from the Presbytery of Baltimore, asking for "coöperation with them in efforts to promote the enlargement of Foreign Missionary operations," which request was acceded to; and at the same time Presbytery pledged to raise the money for the support of one missionary in the Foreign field. To carry into effect this pledge, Foreign missionary societies were formed in the churches. In 1832, Rev. Benjamin Schneider was selected and supported by the Presbytery as their missionary, who commenced his missionary labors in the Island of Candia, but after a brief time, went to Broosa, in Asia Minor. He went as missionary, under the Western Foreign Missionary Society. In 1863, he was, by the General Assembly, transferred to the care of the American Board, from which action the Presbytery strongly dissented. He, however, for a time continued to be supported by Presbytery, but afterwards withdrew from connection with the Presbyterian Church, and united with the Congregational body. In 1833, John C. Lowrie, a licentiate of the Presbytery, having offered himself for Foreign missionary work, was ordained and went as their missionary to Northern India, Presbytery undertaking his support. He was the pioneer missionary of the Church in that field. In 1841, Rev. J. C. Lowrie having been compelled to return to this country on account of ill-health, and from the same cause to remain, Presbytery accepted and supported Rev. J. L. Scott as their missionary in the place of Mr. Lowrie, in the same field. In 1837, at the autumn meeting, Presbytery resolved "to contribute six hundred dollars per annum, in addition to the support of the two missionaries for which they are pledged, to support a missionary at Bassa Cove, on the west coast of Africa, said missionary to be under the care of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions."

The Records show that a large number of young men entered the ministry from the churches of the Presbytery. Much of the time of the sessions of the Presbytery was occupied in the examinations and hearing the trials of candidates. In the discharge of this duty there was the exercise of great fidelity. The great demand for ministers did not influence the Presbytery to lower the standard of ministerial qualification. Previous to the establishment of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, candidates for the ministry pursued their theological studies under pastors. The ministers in whom the theological professor and pastor were combined, were at an earlier period, Dr. Samuel Finley of West Nottingham, Rev. Samuel Blair of Fagg's Manor, and Dr.

Francis Allison of New London. At a subsequent period, Dr. Robert Smith of Pequea, Dr. James Latta of Chestnut Level, and Rev. Nathan Grier of Forks of Brandywine. Many of the ministers, who became distinguished in the Church, received under these men their theological education. Blair's School produced such men as Davies, Rodgers, Cumming, James Finley, Robert Smith and Hugh Henry. As one remarked, "Each one resembled the children of a king." "The school at Pequea," under Robert Smith, Webster says, "was prolific in valuable men." Dr. John McMillan and Dr. Samuel Martin were his pupils. Of the pupils of Dr. Francis Allison, were Dr. Ewing, Dr. James Latta, Matthew Wilson, and many others who attained to great distinction in the Church. In no period of the history of the Church in this country, have there been more distinguished ministers, than those taught by these pastors.

The large number of pious and talented but poor young men that offered themselves as candidates for the ministry, led Presbytery to devise measures to raise funds, to aid them in their education. As early as 1771, Presbytery adopted a plan which they proposed to the Synod, for the education of pious but indigent young men for the ministry, which plan the Synod approved of and recommended to the Presbyteries. This was the first step towards concerted action by the Church, for the education of young men, without means, for the ministry. But owing to the troublous times before and during the Revolutionary war, and the poverty of the people, the plan was not carried into effect. In 1807, Presbytery, deeply impressed with the necessity of an increase of the ministry to supply their vacant churches and the promising fields opened to missionary efforts, resolved to organize themselves into a society, for the purpose of aiding indigent young men to receive an education for the ministry; and to carry out their object with greater efficiency, the Presbytery made application to, and obtained from the legislature of Delaware, an act of incorporation. The churches were urged to form educational societies for the purpose of raising funds for this object, and which was generally done. A number of young men, by the pecuniary assistance of this Presbyterial society, were enabled to enter the ministry. Strict supervision was exercised by the Presbytery over its licentiates. They had regular appointments assigned, in supplying the vacancies within the bounds of the Presbytery. In 1794, Presbytery adopted the following resolution: "Resolved, that all probationers under our care, labor one year in the vacancies of the Presbytery, that we may have knowledge of their abilities and be able to recommend them to other Presbyteries in whose bounds they may travel." Nor were probationers permitted to labor outside of the bounds of Presbytery without permission, asked

and obtained. This supervision was wise and salutary, and which might still be exercised with profit.

The Presbytery exercised great care in receiving ministers from other ecclesiastical bodies to labor within their bounds. Such were first required to preach before a committee of the Presbytery, and obtain their approval as to their soundness in the faith, before they were allowed to preach in any of the churches. This was designed as a safeguard against heresy.

From 1800, the pastoral relation was more generally constituted and became more permanent. Many of the churches had reached the point of self-support, which for a long period had been feeble and dependent on being supplied by Presbytery.

Before the commencement of the temperance movement, ardent spirits were considered a necessary part in the entertainment of the Presbytery, by the churches where it met. In April, 1825, at its meeting in the church of Lower Brandywine, the pastor, Rev. Thomas Love, and the session decided to substitute tea for spirits. The members were so much better pleased with the change, that ever afterwards spirits were dispensed with.

From the beginning of the temperance movement, the ministers of the Presbytery were its zealous advocates. In 1842, in a paper adopted on temperance, pastors were enjoined to discipline all members engaged in the traffic in any way, and to refuse admission to church membership, either on profession of faith or by certificate, to any applicants engaged in such traffic. On the review of the Records, Synod took exception to this action, as an adoption of a term of communion contrary to the word of God. In 1831, the state of religion being so low in the churches, Presbytery resolved to hold religious services in each church for four days, and the ministers were formed into committees for this purpose. These services were accompanied by a wonderful outpouring of the Spirit upon all the congregations. There was great quickening of spiritual life and large accessions were made to the churches. These four days' meetings became an established custom in the churches, and which is still kept up. They have been attended with great blessing to the churches.

The Presbytery of New Castle, in common with other Presbyteries, was deeply agitated by the controversies that resulted in the division of the church in 1837. The Presbytery was divided into two parties, by their doctrinal views and sympathies. The large majority belonged to the party known as old school. In consequence of the state of feeling growing out of the controversies of the time, the Presbytery in 1833, was divided by the General Assembly, by the erection of the Presbytery of Wilmington. The members of this

Presbytery, with the exception of Rev. Samuel M. Gayley, belonged to the party known as New School. The Presbytery of Wilmington, as stated in the Records of the Presbytery of New Castle, was dissolved by the Assembly in 1835, and Mr. Gayley re-united with the Presbytery of New Castle. The other members, it would appear, still claimed to be the Presbytery of Wilmington. At the division in 1837, the Presbytery of Wilmington appears in connection with the New School Assembly.

The position of the Presbytery of New Castle in regard to the matters in controversy is indicated by its adoption, in 1834, of the "Act and Testimony," which had been issued by certain members of the last Assembly.

The language of the resolution by which it was adopted, is as follows: "It is adopted both as it is intended to be a declaration of adherence to the standards of our Church, and a public testimony against errors which we believe to exist in the Presbyterian Church." This resolution was adopted by eighteen yeas, one nay, and twelve *non-liquets*. A majority of those who voted *non-liquet* were ready to condemn the errors testified against in the Act and Testimony, but were opposed to its formal adoption by the Presbytery. At the same meeting it was resolved "to examine all ministers seeking admission into their body." This resolution was introduced by Rev. Dr. Samuel Martin.

In 1837, the excinding Act of Assembly was approved by a vote of twenty-five yeas to five nays. This vote shows the relative strength of the parties in the Presbytery at that time. It is thus seen that the Presbytery of New Castle, throughout the controversies of the time, warmly sympathized and acted with the party known as the Old School. By this second schism, as by the first, there were engendered considerable bitterness of feeling and alienations. The division was in many respects unfortunate, as the forces of the Church were divided, and for a time antagonistic. Time, the healer of all things, has eventually brought the two branches of the Church to see eye to eye, and to unite again in mutual confidence and respect. In 1837, after the division, the Presbytery embraced 27 ministers, 33 churches and 3,736 communicants; contributions for missions, \$2,214, and for education, \$452. At the autumn meeting at New Castle, the recommendation of the Assembly, "that the American Home Missionary Society and The American Education Society should cease to operate in the Presbyterian Church," was approved. Church sessions were directed to send up their records, hereafter, at every spring meeting for examination. This had hitherto been greatly neglected, and because of this neglect, a number of the church sessions kept no Records. If they did, they are

lost; but the presumption is they were not kept. At the sessions in April, 1838, the Presbytery resolved to conduct its own Home Missionary Work. A committee was appointed to supervise it and to receive and disburse the collections for this purpose, which committee was instructed to pay any surplus there might be to the Treasurer of the Assembly's Board of Domestic Missions. At the stated meeting in April, 1839, it abandoned conducting her Home Mission Work, and resumed its connection with the Assembly's Board.

At the meeting in the following September, ministers were enjoined to observe the third chapter of the Directory for Worship; and at every spring meeting they would be required to state if they had observed the injunction. This requirement, after a time, was omitted as the article in question was universally observed.

September, 1840, at the meeting at Red Clay, a division of the Synod of Philadelphia being agitated and likely to be brought before the Synod at its next meeting, a resolution was adopted, opposing such division, if it involved a division of the Presbytery, as they were a united and harmonious body, and because their bounds were not such as to prevent a convenient and full attendance on the part of all the members.

At this time there seems to have been felt some dissatisfaction with the Board of Domestic Missions, as ministers were instructed to retain in their hands the collections for this Board, and to pay first their own missionaries, and forward any surplus there may be to the Board.

At the next meeting, in April, 1841, it was ordered that all monies for Domestic Missions, pass through the hands of the Presbytery. They seemed determined that the pay to their own missionaries would not be dependent upon the action of the Board. It was also resolved that no minister engaged in any secular business would be recommended for aid to the Board of Domestic Missions. In 1842, the churches experienced a revival of great power. Large accessions were made to the churches. In the same year the Presbytery was divided, by the Synod's order, at its meeting in Washington. Twelve of its ministers were erected into the Presbytery of Donegal. The new Presbytery embraced 18 churches. In consequence of this division, the Presbytery of New Castle was reduced to 18 ministers and 21 churches. The following members composed the Presbytery after the division: John D. Perkins, James Latta, J. N. C. Grier, D. D., Thomas Love, Alexander G. Morrison, John M. Dickey, James K. Wilson, Alfred Hamilton, George Burrowes, Robert P. Dubois, Samuel M. Gayley, William W. Latta, Stephen R. Wynkoop, John W. Grier, William R. Work, Abraham Dewitt, Elijah Wilson, and John B. Spotswood. The Synod of Philadelphia, at its meeting in

1842, sent a request to the Presbyteries to take order in reference to the division of the Synod. The Presbytery of New Castle, now that the Presbytery had been divided, favored the division. In 1844, the Presbytery overtured the Synod to take measures for its division. The Waynesburg church with its pastor, Rev. W. W. Latta, was transferred to the Presbytery of Donegal.

April, 1846, the following action was taken by the Presbytery in relation to slavery: "Presbytery learning and believing that cases exist in which slaves are either held by, or liable to be sold for debts due corporated bodies connected with congregations or Theological seminaries of the Presbyterian Church, does hereby protest against such relations as unjust and improper." This was not passed unanimously. Four ministers and one elder entered their dissent.

At the October meeting it was resolved to employ a colporteur to visit congregations within their bounds, with the publications of the Presbyterian Board, his salary to be paid by the Presbytery, which was carried out with great success and to the benefit of the people.

At the stated meeting, October, 1853, Dr. J. M. Dickey presented a paper, asking, "Would it be expedient or desirable for this Presbytery to establish under its patronage an Institution for the thorough education of colored youth in this country, according to the recommendation of the last General Assembly?" This matter was referred to a committee, consisting of Dr. J. M. Dickey, R. P. Dubois, and Alfred Hamilton, ministers, and J. Kelton and A. Gibson, elders. The committee, at the same meeting reported, recommending the establishment of an Institution for the education of colored young men, to be called Ashmun Institute, under the care of this Presbytery. A Board of Trustees was appointed; buildings were afterwards erected, and the Institution opened in 1857, under the Principalship of Rev. John Pym Carter. This Institution has developed into Lincoln University. The idea of the establishment of such an Institution was suggested to Dr. J. M. Dickey by the ordination, in 1849, of Mr. J. L. Mackey, to go as a missionary to the Island of Corisco, on the west coast of Africa. As the first fruits of this Institution, in 1858, James Amos and Armisted Miller received license from the Presbytery. In January, 1859, Thomas H. Amos was licensed to preach the Gospel. April 12, all three were ordained by New Castle Presbytery to the full work of the ministry, to go as missionaries to Liberia.

In 1845, Presbytery embraced 19 ministers and 21 churches; in 1864, 28 ministers and 25 churches.

The Presbyteries of Lewes and Wilmington, having been formed out of the Presbytery of New Castle, and after the union in 1870, being merged into the Presbytery of New Castle, it is necessary, to a con-

nected history of the Presbytery, to give a brief sketch of these Presbyteries.

#### PRESBYTERY OF LEWES.

This Presbytery has had a chequered history. In 1735, an overture was brought into the Synod of Philadelphia, from Mr. Hook, Mr. Stevenson, Mr. Jamison and Mr. Martin, desiring that they be set off from New Castle Presbytery and erected into a Presbytery by themselves; the Synod agreed that they become a Presbytery under the name of the Presbytery of Lewes-Town, and ordered them to meet and constitute the 19th day of November next, at Lewes-Town. The following year it was reported to Synod, that, "The Presbytery of Lewes did erect themselves according to the order of Synod last year." In 1736, Mr. Patrick Glasgow was licensed, and afterwards ordained and installed pastor of the church of Manokin. 1739, the roll of the Presbytery contained the names of seven members, John Thompson, Hugh Carlisle, and Patrick Glasen or Glasgow, having been received since its organization. In 1741, there was present in the Synod, from the Presbytery, James Martin and Robert Jamison; 1742, only Jamison was present. After the death of Rev. Henry Hook, which occurred the year previous, the Presbytery being reduced to two members, Martin and Jamison, was merged in New Castle.

In 1758, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia "Agreed that Messrs. John Miller, Tuttle, Harris, Henry and Wilson, be a Lewes-Town Presbytery, and have the congregations in Kent in Delaware, Sussex, Worcester, Somerset, Dorset (Dorchester), Queen Anne's, and Kent in Maryland under their care, to meet first at Cool Spring on the last Tuesday of July next; and that the Presbyteries of New Castle assist them in supplying their vacancies till they be further provided with settled pastors." Webster says, "It was formed of the brethren of both sides, and seems to have been a happily-united and harmonious body." In 1763, the names of Charles Tennent and Joseph Montgomery were on its roll. In 1765, Alexander Huston was ordained by the Presbytery. 1768, Mr. Montgomery resigned his charge at Lewes, and became connected with New Castle. 1769, James McCrackin and John Bacon are reported as members of the Presbytery. 1770, Jacob Kerr and Thomas McCracken appear on the roll of Presbytery; Mr. Kerr was settled as pastor of Wicomico. 1771, Presbytery reported the deaths of Charles Tennent and Thomas McCracken, and the dismissal of John Bacon, who had removed to Boston. In 1773, the Presbytery of Lewes-Town requested Synod, "that the Rev. Mr. Thomas Reed, the Rev. Josiah Lewis, and Mr. Thomas Smith, a candidate under the care of New Castle Presbytery, should be set off from New Castle Presbytery and annexed to them." The Synod

granted the request so far as to set off only Mr. Josiah Lewis. 1775, Rev. Ebenezer Brooks was received from New Castle. In 1780, the names of John Rankin and Samuel McMasters appear as members of the Presbytery. 1785, the name of William Linn is reported as received from the Presbytery of Donegal. 1788, William McKee was a member of the Presbytery. The following ministers were members of the Presbytery at this time: John Miller, Dr. Matthew Wilson, Jacob Kerr, John Rankin, Samuel McMasters, and William McKee.

In 1810, the Presbytery was dissolved by the Synod, and its members, Rev. Messrs. John B. Slemmons, Stuart Williamson and Joseph Copes, with the churches under its care, were set over to the Presbytery of New Castle. The churches of this Presbytery suffered greatly by emigration of the people to other sections of the country; in consequence of which it was with difficulty they could support their ministers. The growing depletion of the congregations occasioned frequent changes in the membership of the Presbytery.

In 1824, it was re-organized by the Synod, its bounds the same as before, with the addition of the churches of Drawyers, Middletown, German's Bridge and Church Hill. Before 1850 it must have been dissolved, as in that year the Presbytery of Eastern Shore was erected by the Synod of Philadelphia, and which embraced the same territory as the Presbytery of Lewes. It consisted of Revs. Messrs. Gaylord L. Moore, J. L. Vallandigham, John White, James M. Olmsted and Edwin Town. This Presbytery continued in existence only five years, as appears from the Records of the Assembly. When dissolved its members and churches were attached to the Presbytery of Baltimore.

In 1858, the Presbytery of Lewes was again erected in accordance with the following action of the General Assembly:

*Resolved, 1.* "That the counties of Northampton and Accomac, in Virginia; Worcester, Somerset, Dorchester, Talbot, Caroline and Queen Anne, in Maryland, and Sussex, in Delaware, be and hereby are constituted the Presbytery of Lewes; to which, with the consent of the Presbytery of New Castle, shall be added the County of Kent, in Delaware; said Presbytery to be attached to and form a part of the Synod of Baltimore."

*Resolved, 2.* "That said Presbytery hold its first meeting, for organization and the transaction of business, in the church of Lewes, Sussex County, Delaware, on the third Wednesday of September, 1858, and that Rev. A. C. Heaton, or the oldest minister present, preach the sermon, constitute the Presbytery and preside till a Moderator be chosen."

In 1859, with the consent of New Castle, the church of Dover, Delaware, was transferred to the Presbytery of Lewes. It consisted of

the following members: Revs. A. C. Heaton, J. T. H. Waite, Henry C. Fries, William C. Handy, Adam Craig, Alanson A. Haines and Cornelius H. Mustard. It included eleven churches. Most of the churches were feeble, but the majority of them have developed into strength and influence. In 1870, the Presbytery was merged into New Castle.

#### THE PRESBYTERY OF WILMINGTON.

The erection of this Presbytery grew out of the controversies that issued in the division of the Church in 1837. At the meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia, 1833, at Columbia, Pennsylvania, several ministers and churches, sympathizing with the views and measures of the party designated as New School, requested to be set off into a new Presbytery, to be called the Presbytery of Wilmington, which request was granted. The Presbytery was formed rather on the ground of "elective affinity," than of Geographical lines. Nevertheless, the chief part of its territory lay within that of New Castle Presbytery. The Synod ordered the new Presbytery to hold its first meeting, for organization and the transaction of business, at Drawyers' church, November 19th, at 11 o'clock A. M., to be opened with a sermon by Rev. Samuel Bell, or the oldest minister present. Rev. E. W. Gilbert was chosen the first Stated Clerk. It consisted of the following members, viz.: Rev. Messrs. Samuel Bell, E. W. Gilbert, James C. Howe, John Patton, James Knox, Hugh Hammill, R. W. Landis, S. M. Gayley, Warren G. Jones and Arthur Granger; and included fifteen churches, viz.: Christiana, Dover, St. George's, Second Wilmington, New Castle, Elkton, Pencader, Rockland, Ashton, Pa., First Wilmington, Drawyers', Hanover Street, Wilmington, Georgetown and Brick church. In the Records of New Castle Presbytery, bearing date 1863, it is stated that the Presbytery of Wilmington was dissolved by the Assembly in 1835, and Rev. S. M. Gayley, a member of the Presbytery of Wilmington, appeared and asked to be received into the Presbytery of New Castle, which request was granted. However, we find on the roll of the New School Assembly in 1837, the Presbytery of Wilmington, with the names of the original members retained. The Presbytery of Wilmington must, therefore, have maintained its organization. After 1835, the names of the churches of First Wilmington, Rockland, New Castle and Dover are on the roll of New Castle Presbytery. Subsequently the church of Christiana Bridge was attached to the Presbytery of New Castle, and was afterwards re-transferred to the Presbytery of Wilmington. In 1834, the General Assembly erected the Synod of Delaware, composed of the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia and the Presbyteries of Wilmington and Lewes. Its first and only meeting was held in the Second Church of Wilmington, October, 1834. It was

opened with a sermon by Rev. James Patterson, of the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia. Rev. E. W. Gilbert was chosen Stated Clerk at a salary of twenty dollars. This Synod was dissolved by the Assembly in 1835.

In 1838, the Presbytery became attached to the Synod of Pennsylvania, in which connection it remained until after the union of 1870. The Records of the Presbytery for the first twenty-one years of its existence have been hopelessly lost, which is greatly to be regretted. From the Records from 1854 to 1870, it is abundantly evident that the Presbytery was characterized by great earnestness and zeal in efforts for church extension, and in promoting revivals. Several very precious revivals were experienced by the churches, to which, in consequence, large accessions were made. Great changes, during its thirty-seven years of existence, occurred in its membership. Of those who became connected with it, we may mention the names of Dr. T. Ralston Smith, H. I. Gaylord, Dr. I. W. Handy, Dr. George W. Wiswell, Dr. William Hogarth, Dr. A. D. Pollock, Dr. William Aikman, J. G. Hamner, Jr., Dr. John Crowell and Dr. Lafayette Marks. Its Records show a healthy and steady growth in the number of its churches, communicants and liberality. The first movement towards the re-union of the churches was hailed by the Presbytery with sincere delight. They adopted the terms of re-union unanimously, by a rising vote, accompanied with prayer and praise. The last meeting of the Presbytery was held at Milford, April, 1870; the last Moderator being Rev. S. R. Schofield, of Delaware City; and Stated Clerk, Rev. John Crowell, D. D., of Odessa. Presbytery at that time consisted of eighteen ministers and eighteen churches, which had 1929 communicants.

The re-united Assembly in 1870, in reconstruction of the Synods and Presbyteries, the Synod of Baltimore was constituted to consist of the Presbyteries and parts of Presbyteries included within the States of Delaware and Maryland, the District of Columbia, Virginia and that part of West Virginia east of the Allegheny Ridge. By this action the Presbytery of New Castle was divided into two equal parts. The northern portion, with the ministers and churches in Chester County, Pa., was erected into the Presbytery of Chester. The part south of Mason and Dixon's line, with the Presbyteries of Wilmington and Lewes, were constituted, by the Synod of Baltimore at its first meeting, the Presbytery of New Castle, and became a part of the Synod of Baltimore. Its territory is the Peninsula south of Pennsylvania, and between the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers and bays. It includes the whole of the State of Delaware and the eastern shores of Maryland and Virginia. The Presbytery of Chester claimed to be

the legal successor of the old Presbytery of New Castle, and entitled to the custody of its Records, its franchises and the power to discharge its duties, which claim was ratified by the Synod of Philadelphia at its next stated meeting. The Presbytery of New Castle, refusing to admit the claim of the Presbytery of Chester as legal successor to the Presbytery of New Castle, carried the question of succession up to the next General Assembly for its decision. The Assembly decided the question in favor of the Presbytery of New Castle, declaring "the reconstructed Presbytery of New Castle to be the legal successor of the former New Castle Presbytery and as such entitled to the custody of the Records, to the possession and enjoyment of all the rights and franchises, and liable to the performance of all the duties of said Presbytery."

At the first meeting of the Presbytery Rev. John Crowell, D. D., was chosen Stated Clerk. In 1871, the Presbytery consisted of 37 ministers, and had under its care 52 churches. The communicants were 4,908; contributions to the Boards, \$6,018; for congregational purposes, \$48,318; miscellaneous objects, \$1,561.

In 1881, there were 48 ministers, 52 churches, 175 elders, 5,566 communicants; contributions to the Boards, \$6,692; for congregational purposes, \$53,317; for miscellaneous objects, \$6,958. This shows an increase in communicants of over 13 per cent.; of contributions to the Boards, of 15 per cent.; for congregational, over 13 per cent., and for miscellaneous objects, over 345 per cent.

In 1887, there were 47 ministers, 53 churches, 187 elders, 5,926 communicants; monies contributed to all the Boards, \$13,175; for congregational expenses, \$60,839; for miscellaneous objects, \$7,041.

In seventeen years since the reconstruction of the Presbytery, there has been a steady and healthy advancement. In 1887, the number of communicants as compared with 1871, shows an increase of over 20 per cent.; in contributions to the Boards, there is an increase of 118 per cent.; to congregational purposes, an increase of 20 per cent., and to miscellaneous objects, of over 350 per cent. If we compare the Sabbath-school membership of 1887 with that of 1871, the same gratifying progress will appear. In 1871, the Sabbath-school membership was 5,488; in 1887, it was 7,086, an increase of 30 per cent. These figures show that all the departments of Church work have been carried on with fidelity and vigor.

The history of the Presbytery of New Castle is a part of the history of the Church in this country, from the beginning. Within her borders was the cradle of organized Presbyterianism on this continent.

Here Makemie, the apostle and organizer of the Presbyterian Church, labored. Here are the churches which he planted, still

green and vigorous, and fruitful in their old age. New Castle Presbytery, though the second in the date of its organization, yet its territory furnished five of the original members of the first Presbytery, and only eleven years afterwards was it organized.

The limits of this brief sketch forbade the giving, to any extent, the names of ministers connected with the Presbytery, the changes by death, removal and the reception of ministers, yet, in however brief a sketch, there are names that cannot be passed over in silence. Names than which none of greater distinction are found in the annals of the Church. Of the members connected with the Presbytery in its early history we would mention George Gillespie, Samuel and James Finley, Samuel Blair, John Rogers, Samuel Davies, Francis Allison, Alexander McDowell, Robert Smith, James Latta and John Miller. All of these were men of distinguished ability, and who had a prominent part in settling the faith and polity of the church. Three of those who were pastors of churches in the Presbytery became moderators of the General Assembly; namely, John Rodgers, D. D., Robert Smith, D. D., and James Latta, D. D. John Rodgers, D. D., the first Moderator of the Assembly, though then a pastor in New York, had been pastor for sixteen years of the churches of St. George and Forest, in Delaware. Drs. Smith and Latta spent their ministerial lives as pastors in the Presbytery. Four ministers who had been connected with the Presbytery were elected to the Presidency of the College of New Jersey. These were Samuel Blair, Jr., Samuel Davies, Samuel Finley and Samuel Stanhope Smith. Davies and Smith were not at the time of their election members of the Presbytery, but both had been in their early ministry. From New Castle Presbytery Samuel Davies went as the pioneer of Presbyterianism to Virginia, and Dr. John McMillan, Dr. Joseph Smith, James Finley, and others, as the pioneers of Presbyterianism in Western Pennsylvania.

A brief notice of some of the early ministers of the Presbytery may be in place in this historical sketch.

George Gillespie was one of the original members of the Presbytery. He was a native of Glasgow, Scotland, was educated in the University, was licensed by the Presbytery of Glasgow, 1711. Emigrated to America in 1712 and in 1713 was ordained and installed pastor of the Church of Head of Christiana, in which relation he remained until his death on January 2d, 1760. He was a man of talents, learning and piety, a sound and able preacher, and prominent and influential in the Church Courts. Dr. Francis Allison, in a sermon preached before the Synod in 1758 speaks of him as "That pious and zealous saint of God."

Rev. Samuel Finley, D. D., was a native of Ireland. Was educated

at the Log College, became pastor of New Erection, West Nottingham, Md., in 1744, in which relation he continued until 1761, when called to the Presidency of Princeton College. He was a man of great natural ability, learning and eloquence, and of an earnest and devout spirit. He was distinguished as an educator of youth. His school at West Nottingham attained to great celebrity. Eminent as ministers and educators were Dr. Francis Allison, Alexander McDowell, Samuel Blair and Dr. Robert Smith. Dr. Francis Allison was the most distinguished scholar in the country in his day. Samuel Blair is spoken of as scholarly, eloquent and saintly. He exercised great influence in the Courts of the Church. In the records of the Synod it is said, "They waited for him as for the dew." Dr. Robert Smith, of Pequa, was a man of great prominence and influence in the early history of the church. His ministry was in the rural church of Pequa. He was distinguished for his learning, devoutness of spirit, ability as a preacher and educator of youth. His three sons became eminent and talented ministers. Dr. Samuel Martin, one of his pupils, considered him in point of talent as superior to any of his sons. In the schools of these eminent men a large number of ministers who afterwards became distinguished in the Church received their theological training. James Latta, D. D., of Chestnut Level, deserves mention in connection with these distinguished ministers. He was a man of talent, culture, and an able preacher of the Gospel. His four sons became useful and influential ministers; three of whom exercised their ministry in the Presbytery of New Castle. Rev. John Miller, the pastor of Duck Creek and Dover, Delaware, for more than forty years, was one of the eminent and useful ministers of the time. He was the father of Dr. Samuel Miller, who became Professor of Church History in the Theological Seminary at Princeton. The members of the Presbytery in this period of its history were men of a grand type, were specially raised up by God to lay broad and deep the foundations of the Church.

At a later period we may mention the names of Rev. Nathan and J. N. C. Grier, father and son, whose united pastorates of the church of Brandywine Manor extend over a period of eighty years. Rev. Dr. Samuel Martin, of Chanceford, and Rev. Dr. James Magraw, for thirty-one years the efficient pastor of West Nottingham, Rev. Dr. Ebenezer and Dr. J. M. Dickey, father and son, successively pastors of the church of Oxford, Pa., Rev. S. M. Gayley, the fine scholar and distinguished educator, of whom Dr. Van Rennsaler remarked "that any minister with his ability and qualifications as a teacher, it would be a sin for him to devote his time to preaching." The amiable and gentle R. P. Dubois, for forty years the esteemed and successful pastor of New London Church; also S. R. Wynkoop, of First Church, Wil-

mington, and John B. Spotswood, D. D., pastor for forty years of the Church of New Castle, scholarly and cultured, the able theologian, sound preacher and faithful and devoted pastor. All these and many others, whose names are deserving of mention did limits permit, were able, faithful and successful ministers. The Presbytery of New Castle has an honorable history. Its ministry have ever been loyal to the standards of the Church; zealous for the church's extension, faithful in preaching a pure Gospel, and earnest in their advocacy of every cause which had for its object the social and moral welfare of humanity; and to-day, in this Year of Grace, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty-Eight (1888), are its churches manned by faithful and earnest men, who are animated with the spirit of the fathers. In the history of the Presbyterian Church in this land that of New Castle Presbytery must have an honored place.

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