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HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,
ON OCCASION OF THE
REOPENING AND DEDICATION,
OF THE
REFORMED (DUTCH) CHURCH,
OF
POMPTON PLAINS, MORRIS COUNTY, N. J.,

ON NOVEMBER 22, 1871,

BY THE LATE

REV. JOHN VAN NESTE SCHENK.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CONSISTORY.

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JERSEY CITY, N. J.
NEW-YORK:

S. W. GREEN, PRINTER, 10 AND 18 JACOB STREET.

1872.

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

THE service which, by resolution of Consistory, I am called upon to render this morning, is, to my mind, both *important* and *sacred*. To recall the things which have been; to walk amid the scenes of years long gone by; to reproduce the faces and forms of those who have lived and loved and died for God, is no unmeaning or profitless work. Solomon, the wise, tells us that "God requireth that which is past." Its mercies, its lessons of wisdom, its successes, as well as its mistakes and failures, are not to be ignored or forgotten.

While the living present makes full demand upon our time and energy, and the opening future calls for an ever-discerning eye to read "the signs of the times," that we may prepare for coming responsibilities, let none think that it is time unwisely spent, which is employed in the labor of retrospection.

I am to traverse this morning the long period of one hundred and thirty-five years, during which time a church of our name and order has had an existence in this community, and give you, as far as our gathered materials will permit, a record of its establishment and succeeding history. As necessarily introductory to it, we shall also combine with it a *brief sketch* of the *civil settlement of this valley*.

At this point I desire to make public acknowledgment of the invaluable help received from a former Pastor of this church, the Rev. Garret C. Schanck, who has kindly put at my disposal his manuscript, prepared years ago, from which I have frequently, and sometimes at considerable length, made literal quotations.

CIVIL HISTORY.

Respecting the Indians, who formerly occupied this valley, there are but few traditions left. They belonged to the great and powerful tribe of the Minisi, who held their council-seat

at Minisink, on the Delaware. The particular branch of the tribe residing here were doubtless called "the Pomptons," so named from the river, which is said to mean "crooked-mouthed."

In the early days of the settlement they were very numerous, and some of the white inhabitants learned their language, and, occasionally, when they met, would use it in conversation with each other. Tradition says, that they had a few acres of planting land near the Schuyler Basin, and also that there was an Indian orchard at Pacquanac, near the present residence of Sheriff Ryerson. This valley was one of their traveling routes from the sea-shore to the West, as there was a path, called the Minisink path, running probably through what is "The Notch," crossing the Passaic River in the vicinity of Little Falls, thence along by the foot of the hills, on the eastern side of this valley to Pompton, and from there probably following up the Pequannoc toward the Delaware.

The first purchases of land, of which any record has been found, were made in 1695. In that year Major Anthony Brockholst, Captain Arent Schuyler, Samuel Byard, George Ryerson, John Mead, Samuel Berrie, David Mandeville, and Hendrick Mandeville mutually agreed with one another, to purchase of the proprietors of East-Jersey five thousand five hundred acres of land at Poquaneck, in what was then in the county of Essex, and on the east side of the Poquaneck River, (what is now improperly called the Pompton River.)

The Indians then claimed the whole valley, and, in order to make good their title from the Proprietors, it was necessary to purchase first the Indian right. This was effected on the 6th of June, 1695, by Arent Schuyler, in behalf of his associates, for a certain quantity of wampum and other articles of merchandise of the value of two hundred and fifty pounds. The Indians were unwilling to sell the limited quantity of 5500 acres, but sold all in the tract lying between the Passaic on the south, Pompton on the north, and between the foot of the hills on the east and on the west. (See Appendix, Note 1.)

The Indian title having thus been fairly extinguished, Anthony Brockholst and Arent Schuyler, in behalf of themselves and associates, obtained a patent of the Proprietors on Novem-

ber 11th, 1695, for 5500 acres on the east side of the Pequannoe River. This purchase was by them divided into three patents. The first was called "*The Lower Pacquannoe Patent.*" It commenced at what was called the deep gully and run of water just above the lowlands, named Poquannock, (said to be the small stream running near where Mr. John D. Ryerson now lives,) and extended south to the Passaic River, about three miles in length and one and a half in breadth, containing 2750 acres. Of this patent Brockholst and Schuyler sold the one third part of their right to Nicholas Byard. The tract was then divided equally between the two parties; that is, Brockholst, Schuyler, and Byard forming the first party, and Mead, Berrie, Ryerson, and David and Hendrick Mandeville the other party, it being decided by lot that the last-named five should have the southern part and the first three the northern half of this tract.

The second, called "*The Upper Pacquannoe Patent,*" extended from the deep gully and run to a line running east from the mouth of the Pompton River, or what is now called the Ramapo River, and contained 1260 acres. The one third of this Patent was also sold to Nicholas Byard. It remained undivided until the year 1755, when it was divided between Harry Brockholst, (to whom the right had come from his father,) Philip Schuyler, (to whom his one third part had been willed by his father Arent,) and the four sons of Samuel Byard, the eldest son and heir-at-law of Nicholas Byard. This tract of 1260 acres, on the 24th of January, was assigned, by the Board of Proprietors, to George Willocks and Margaret, his wife, in right of Ann, wife of Robert Wharton, as part of the proprietary right given her by her father, Thomas Rudyard, one of the Proprietors of East-Jersey, and, by Willocks, sold to Brockholst and Schuyler.

The third was called "*The Pompton Patent.*" It extended from the mouth of the Pompton or Ramapo River, up the Pequannoe to the foot of the hills about one and a half miles, and ran back from the river east nearly the same distance, containing 1250 acres. Of this Brockholst and Schuyler also sold one third of their right to Nicholas Byard. It was then divided between the two parties in the same way as the lower Pacqua-

nae Patents in this case, the southern part falling to the three and the northern part to the five. The division line between these two parts was on or near the road, as it now runs from the bridge by Henry S. Van Ness's to the Steel-Works. The party of five concerned in the first and third patents thus possessed 2000 acres, which came to them in the division, and for which they paid the Proprietors of East-Jersey two hundred pounds. After this general division, it is probable that the respective parties divided, in an equitable manner, the tracts between them personally for farms. It is evident that some of them have remained in their families, through succeeding generations, down to the present time.

In the year 1696 or 1697, Anthony Brockholst and Arent Schuyler settled in this valley, on the east side of the river, just below the Steel-Works, near to each other; Brockholst on the spot where Major William Colfax now resides, and Schuyler, as near as can be ascertained, on the site of the residence of Doctor William Colfax.

Brockholst and Schuyler were thus, in all probability, the pioneers in the *settlement* of this region, and the first to open what was then a wilderness, unless the tradition, that Jost Beam settled at Wynockie as early as 1660, is true.

Who first explored the country is not now certainly known, but probably Arent Schuyler, as it was by him personally that the bargain for the lands was made with the Indians. There is a tradition that some years previous to this, he was sent out from New-York on business in this direction. During that trip he may have had his attention drawn to this region. This, however, is simple conjecture. (Appendix, Note 2.)

At the opening of the year 1700, it is probable that there were only five or six white families residing in this valley, and all, as far as we can learn, on the east side of the river.

The first families, it appears, came from the city of New-York. Some of these, at least, as well as their ancestors, were members of the Dutch Church. Thus we find the names of Susannah Schuck, wife of Anthony Brockholst; Giles Mandeville and his wife, Elsie Hendricks; and Peter Willemsie Roome and his wife, Hester Van Gelder, enrolled as members of the church in New-York, in the year 1686. So, also, the

forefather of the Ryersons was a member of the Church of Brooklyn in the year 1663, having been received that year, by certificate, from the Church of Flatbush. Some of the subsequent settlers came from the vicinity of Hackensack, Aquackanonck, and Bergen, at all of which places Dutch churches were organized at an early day. On this account the new-comers to this region were all of them associated with the church of our denomination, and very naturally brought their preferences with them. Hence the first organization of a church in this region of country, (and the only kind for a long period afterward,) was of our name and order, namely, "The Reformed Dutch Church."

And this brings us to the *ecclesiastical history proper* of this section, into which we must enter somewhat more in detail.

ECCLÉSIASTICAL HISTORY.

The first preaching in this region of country, of which we have any record, was at the ponds, about the year 1710, by Rev. Guiliam Bertholf, who was settled over the churches of Aquackanonck and Hackensack. He was the first Dutch minister in this State, beginning in the year 1694. He was an occasional supply, with some other brethren from the city of New-York and vicinity, who, at far separated intervals, probably rendered the only services enjoyed there from 1710 to 1725.

The first *building* used for divine worship in this section was a log church, situated just south of the present burial-ground, at the Ponds. But when erected, or how long thus employed, we can not tell. Before its destruction, however, it is known to have been used for secular purposes, as a cattle-shed. It was the first church building above the Passaic River, and was called, in the time of Rev. Henriens Coeus, the church "to noorde," that is, on the North. For in 1725 we find that the said Coeus was called to preach at Aquackanonck, Second River, (now Belleville,) and the church "to noorde," which churches (with the exception of Belleville, which he relinquished in 1730) he continued to serve until his death, in 1735. It is evident that the people of this vicinity were connected with his charge, as there is a reference in our

Church Records to an arrangement about his preaching at this time. Moreover, several persons residing here in 1726 and 1727, were received as members of his church at Aquackanonck. The presumption is, that the families residing in the vicinity of Pompton attended services at the Ponds when held there, and those residing at Pacquanac and the lower end of the Plains, at Aquackanonck. This is more than probable, as some of them were not only members there, but one of the residents of Pacquanac, Jonas Ryerson, was in 1716 a Deacon in that church; and so also a resident on the Plains, Paulus Van Derbeck, was a Deacon there in 1732.

REV. JOHANNES VAN DRIESSEN. (APPENDIX, NOTE 3.)

We now come to what was really the *beginning* of our church. Though the formal organization was not effected until the next year, yet upon the death of Dominie Coeus, the people of Aquackanonck and Pompton called, on September 10th, 1735, the Rev. Johannes Van Driessen from the church of Kinderhook. Mr. Van Driessen was born in 1697, "was educated in Belgium, but with a letter from Patroon Van Rensselaer he proceeded to Yale College, and was licensed and ordained by the Congregationalists. . . . He was the first example in the northern section of the church of what was deemed irregularity in ordination, which afterward became the bone of contention between the two parties—the Coetus and Conferentie." The Holland ministry in America applied to him the appellation of "schismatic," while the "Classis of Amsterdam cautioned the American Church against him, so far as is known for no other reason than a want of their ordination." He was nevertheless a preacher of power, to whose ministry God gave many fruits. On settling here, he styles himself in his own handwriting, on the title-page of our first Book of Records, "ordinary preacher at Aquackanonck and extraordinary at Pompton." He probably preached here about one Sabbath out of four.

FIRST HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

About the time he was called, the first house of worship in this valley was built. It was dedicated by him on the 7th of

April, 1736, with a sermon from the Song of Solomon, 1st chapter, 7th and 8th verses, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest," etc. This building was situated on the East bank of the Pompton River, about half-way between the Pompton Lock and the Colfax's, in a straight northern line, upon land formerly belonging to the Schuyler family, but now owned by Mr. Martin J. Ryerson. A part of the foundation still remains, and the exact spot is easily recognizable by a clump of trees, the ground being left untilled, doubtless through reverence on the part of Mr. Ryerson for this ancient landmark. I was on the ground with a neighbor, some three or four months ago. While there, he suggested that the country round about ought to combine in erecting some suitable monument to this first standing-place of God's sanctuary in the then wilderness. The propriety of doing this I now publicly suggest and recommend.

The choosing of this particular place for the Church was doubtless owing to the fact that it was near a public road, as I am told that at this point there was a fording-place in the River.

At the same time the Church Building was dedicated, the *Church was organized* by ordaining Paulus Van Derbeek and Peter Post, Elders, and Johannes Hennyon and Martin Berry, Deacons; its distinctive title being, "The Reformed Dutch Church at Pompton." The church, thus organized, appears for a few years to have greatly prospered. Two years after, or in the year 1738, it comprised a list of seventy-two members, the most of whom, however, were received from other churches. Within the congregational limits were included what are now the congregations of Pompton Plains, Pompton, Montville, and Preckness, and parts of Fairfield and Little Falls.

The Records of the Church were commenced by Mr. Van Driessen in 1736, and were regularly kept as long as he remained Pastor, which was until 1748. Then, unhappily, for some irregular conduct, (which was said to have been "deception and the forgery of a paper, stating that he was on good terms with the Ooctus, when no reconciliation had taken place,") he was silenced. During his pastorate of thirteen

years, he received into the church ninety-nine members. "He subsequently labored at Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, and New-Paltz temporarily, in 1751."

REV. DAVID MARINUS.

After the removal of Mr. Van Driessen, in 1748, the church was vacant until 1752, when the Rev. David Marinus was called to Aquackanonek, in conjunction with Pompton. He continued to preach in these two congregations until 1756, when a church was organized at Totowa. Then a new and joint call was made upon him from these three churches, the services being so arranged that he should preach one half of the time at Aquackanonek, one fourth at Totowa, and one fourth at Pompton. He studied in Pennsylvania, and was licensed by the Coetus the same year that he was called to these places, so that these were undoubtedly his first charges. He appears to have been a man of more than ordinary talent, and of considerable force as a preacher and writer, as some of his published productions of the day indicate. His labors here seem to have been attended with considerable success, especially in the years 1755 and 1756, when there were fourteen or fifteen added, respectively, during these years, to the church.

While he was Pastor here, the difficulty between the Coetus and Conferentie parties was raging fiercely in our Denomination. This difficulty, as perhaps most of you know, grew out of a difference of opinion in regard to the necessity of obtaining all of our ministers from Holland. Those who were of the Coetus insisted that they could see no good reason why ministers might not be educated, qualified, ordained, and sent forth in *this* as well as in the old country; and those who were of the Conferentie as stoutly insisting that they should adhere to the practice hitherto observed. So fierce was this controversy that the whole denomination was affected by it. Even in this congregation the conflict ran so high, that two distinct parties were formed. Dominic Marinus belonged to the Coetus, and carried with him a considerable portion of the congregation. By some means, however, the Conferentie party gained possession of the Church Building, and deprived him of the use of

it. His friends then went to work and put up a small Church on the Plains, as near as can be ascertained, just opposite Thomas Mandeville's. It was built about 1760, and stood for some ten or twelve years.

How long Mr. Marinus continued to preach here, we are not informed, but it appears occasionally for a few years. Then he departed so far from a consistent life that his services were no longer sufferable. Conscious of his error, it is related of him, that he would sometimes remark, "Do as I tell you, and not as I do." From 1773 to 1778, he served the church of Kakiat, or, as afterwards called, West New-Hempstead, New-York. In 1778, he was suspended from the ministry, and in 1780, deposed. The connection between this church and Aquackanonek, as regards their calling conjointly a pastor, terminated with the pastorate of Mr. Marinus, in 1773.

REV. CORNELIUS BLAW.

The Conferentie party, in the mean time, still using the original church building across the river, called the Rev. Cornelius Blaw. In this call they were joined by the churches of Fairfield, Totowa, and Boonton, (or, as it is now called, Montville,) these churches having been organized about 1756. On the 24th of October, 1762, he was inducted into the church by the Rev. Johannes Schnyler, of Hackensack, and Rev. Johannes Ritzema, of New-York. He continued here only about five years, when he was called to Hackensack, and died there about three years thereafter. As regards the fruits of his labors we have no account. He lived in the Parsonage, which was situated at the Two Bridges, where James M. Domarest now resides. It was procured at the time he was called. Keeping no conveyance of his own, the people took turns in bringing him to and from the service. He is said to have come from Holland, and to have been a good preacher. But "he appears to have been a troublesome man of the Conferentie party, invading the congregations of others, accepting calls from the disaffected, and illegally administering the ordinances to them." Like his contemporary, he unfortunately fell into irregular habits.

THE SECOND HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

Soon after the removal of the Rev. Mr. Blaw, steps were taken to unite the two parties and to build a new church for the accommodation of all. In furtherance of this object, a meeting of the congregation was held at the house of Hendrick Van Ness, on December 9th, 1769. It was there decided to build a church of the size of forty by fifty feet, and, in its order, founded on the principles of the Synod of Dort. Peter Romer, Guillian Bertholf, and John Schermerhorn were appointed a building committee. To this committee, as trustees, on the following November, Tunis Doy, of Preakness, conveyed one acre of ground, forming the original lot on which the first church was built and on which the present one now stands. From the stone inserted in the front of our church, it is probable that the erection was principally made in 1771, though the pews were not put in until after the next Pastor, Dr. Meyer, was called. John Schermerhorn, one of the committee, and the Mandeville family, are spoken of as specially active in the building of the church, while as a general thing the people of Pacquanac, Wayhow, Pompton, and Wynockie assisted. As is not strange, they met with some opposition and discouragement, but persevered until it was finally inclosed, and, in due time, ready for use.

At this time, namely, 1771, the name of the church was probably changed from that of Pompton to Pompton Plains. Of this there is no formal action until 1805, when we find on our Minutes the following: "We, the minister, elders, and deacons of the Dutch Reformed Church, at Pompton, do certify, that the said church is named the 'First Reformed Dutch Church of Pompton Plains,' and we do hereby wish the same to be recorded in the clerk's office of the County of Morris, agreeable to an act of the Legislature of the State of New-Jersey, passed January 13th, 1799. As witness our hands and seals, this 10th day of December, 1805. Signed, Stephen Ostrander, V. D. M., followed by the names of the elders and deacons.

REV. HERMANUS MEYER, D.D.

With a church now built and a congregation once more united and harmonious, our people, in conjunction with the churches of Fairfield and Totowa, in November, 1772, called the Rev. Hermanus Meyer, D.D., from Kingston, N. Y. He began his labors here early in the year 1773. From that time until 1785, he faithfully served these three churches. In 1785, Fairfield was relinquished by him, and from that time until 1791, the year of his death, he alternated regularly between Totowa and the Plains, living, meanwhile, in the Parsonage at the Two Bridges.

Dr. Meyer was born in Germany, studied in one of the Holland universities, and came to this country with Dr. Jacob R. Hardenbergh in the year 1762. His first sermon in this country was preached at Raritan, N. J., and his first settlement was at Kingston, N. Y., where he labored nine years, and whence he was called to the Plains. "He was a man of great erudition, of a mild and humble temper, polite and unassuming in his manners, and eminently pious." Few men stood higher in the opinion of the churches at large, and were more generally beloved. His biographer says of him, "He was as much distinguished for the warmth of his piety and the ardor of his evangelical preaching as for his deep reading and learning." Of his preaching at Kingston he writes, "But a few months' exercise of his faithful preaching made it manifest that there was a wide difference between his sentiments and zeal and those to which the people of his first charge had been accustomed. Mancius, his predecessor, had much learning and ability for discussion, and could triumphantly defend the doctrines; but, alas! *consciences* slumbered. Meyer, on the other hand, was very *practical and pointed*. His preaching excited disgust, opposition, and enmity. So practical was his preaching that many of his people declared that, while they respected the man, it was impossible to sit under his ministry. After preaching once pointedly on the necessity of regeneration, one of his officers met him and said, 'Flesh and blood can not endure such preaching.' He quickly answered, 'Flesh and blood

can not inherit the kingdom of God.' They could find no just ground for accusation against him."

He passed through severe trials, especially from the opposition by the Conferentie party, after he had married a sister of Dr. Hardenbergh, who belonged to the Coetus party. He was deprived of his salary, and even irregularly suspended from his ministry at Kingston by a few brethren, without authority of Classis. But "his trials and afflictions all wrought for his good." After his settlement in this church, "he became more earnest, practical, and evangelical than ever." He was subsequently honored by being chosen to two professorships by the Synod, namely, Professor of Hebrew and Lecturer in Theology, from 1784-91.

Though thus distinguished for his piety, learning, and preaching talents, his labors here were attended with comparatively little apparent fruit. Towards the latter part of his ministry he is said to have spoken from the pulpit of his small success with the tears streaming down his cheeks.

But the times in which he labored here were the troublous days of the Revolution. The state of morals was sad. Funeral occasions, instead of being a time of sober reflection, too often became scenes of tippling or drunken revelry. And yet, during his pastorate of nineteen years, he was far from being entirely deprived of seeing of the travail of his soul. For, in that time, he was permitted to welcome thirty-three to the fellowship of the church, and most of them on confession of their faith. The last sermon he preached was in the church on the Plains, from the text, John 3 : 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him," dwelling especially upon the first clause. Two weeks from that day he expected to administer the sacrament, but, in the mean time, was taken sick. During his sickness he sent for one of the elders of the church and gave him directions about his funeral. He also remarked to him, "I meant to have administered the Lord's Supper next Sabbath, but the Lord has intended otherwise. I shall not drink the wine again until I drink it now in my Father's kingdom."

He remarked on tasting wine, "I have no more taste for

what I once relished, but the bread of heaven is prepared for me." He died peaceful and happy, in the full assurance of faith, at six o'clock A.M. of October 27th, 1791. His disease was bilious and remitting fever. His remains lie entombed beneath our church, while the marble slab, on which is inscribed his birth, life, and death, is in the platform immediately in front of the pulpit, destined, ere long, I hope, to be succeeded by a fitting tablet against our walls.

As an item of interest, we will mention, in passing, that the first child baptized in the church on the Plains, on its present site, was Lena, daughter of Anthony Mandeville, on February 8th, 1772. And, as indicative of the loyalty of our church to our country during Revolutionary times, will allude to an incident derived from tradition. At the commencement of the Revolutionary war a liberty pole was put up on the ground near the Parsonage, which the Tories cut down several times. At length the people put up one and defended it with bars of iron, attaching to it a sign-board with these significant words, "Liberty, Property, and No Popery;" thus showing that they were true to the principles which brought them to this country, in a genuine devotion to civil liberty and loyalty to Protestant faith. But we must not dwell.

REV. STEPHEN OSTRANDER.

After the death of Dr. Meyer, in 1791, the church was vacant for about three years. With the close of his pastorate the church of Totowa separated from ours in the settlement of a minister. The Plains church united with Boonton (now Montville) in calling, in the Fall of 1794, the Rev. Stephen Ostrander.

He was born at Poughkeepsie in 1760, studied theology with Drs. Meyer and Livingston, and was licensed to preach in 1792. From that time until he was called to this church he labored as a missionary along the Mohawk River and in the western parts of Greeno, Ulster, and Sullivan counties, and to Delaware County, N. Y., performing his journeys from place to place on horseback, in what was then almost a wilderness. He was a man of good judgment and persevering industry, irreproachable in life, and of great decision of character.

"He was conscientious and exact in the performance of all his duties, unweariedly directing his efforts with a view to usefulness. Well read in theology, he was a sound, practical divine; his ministry was characterized by a plain exhibition of gospel truth, and an urgent enforcement of duty. His disposition was frank and benevolent. Unobtrusive and unassuming in his deportment, he pursued the even tenor of his way, neither seeking nor valuing the distinctions and honors of life," as the calls he subsequently accepted unmistakably testify. While settled here, he preached one third or one fourth of the time at Boonton, giving the remainder of his services to the Plains people. His labors here appear to have been greatly blessed, as in a single year he received as many as twenty-six into the church. This is further evinced by the fact that during the fifteen years of his pastorate ninety-three were added to the church. Soon after his settlement, the congregation, principally through the instrumentality of John de Bow, Esq., provided a parsonage for him on the present site. In 1809, by reason of a local difficulty, in which he became involved in a dispute in regard to schools, and refused to baptize the children of such as differed from him, he was led to remove. In 1810, he accepted a call from Schaghticoke, in the northern part of the State of New-York. Subsequently he had several other charges, until in 1839, in connection with his charge at Blooming Grove, N. Y., he was declared Emeritus. He died in 1845 at Spotswood, N. J.

REV. JACOB T. FIELD.

From 1809 to 1813, the church was again vacant. The Rev. Jacob T. Field was called and installed as pastor, September 19th, 1813. He seems to have been a faithful, active, and fearless minister of God. His establishment of "Societies," as they were called, in different parts of the congregation, with leaders, that profitable service might be enjoyed from time to time; his appointment of meetings to take action against Sabbath desecration; his faithful oversight and treatment of church members, as well as the fruits he was permitted to gather, tell unmistakably of his fidelity.

THE CHURCH REBUILT.

About three months after Mr. Field was called, a congregational meeting was held in the church to take action in regard to the rebuilding of the House of worship. The following resolutions, copied from the Church Books, embody the conclusions reached by the meeting, namely:

"Resolved, 1st. By the meeting unanimously, that the church be rebuilt in the manner hereafter described, and that five trustees be chosen to manage the concerns of said church in the rebuilding thereof.

"Resolved, 2d. That Benjamin Roomes, Yellis A. Mandeville, John Mead, Ewout Van Gelder, and Jacob T. Doremus be the trustees, with full power to carry into effect the object of this meeting.

"Resolved, 3d. That the church be extended sixteen feet toward the road, with a steeple in the East end, the walls to be raised in due proportion, and the windows raised so as to cover the galleries, and that the inside of the church be altered and finished in such manner as the trustees may deem proper."

Then follow two or three resolutions in regard to the way that the pews shall be disposed of. No statement being made to the contrary, we take it for granted that these resolutions were carried out harmoniously and successfully. The congregation thus provided for themselves what, in those days, was a very large and beautiful church.

Previous to the coming of Mr. Field, that part of the Plains congregation now included in the bounds of the congregations of Pompton and Boardville, feeling the want of better accommodations for holding religious services, met, in the month of February, 1812, and decided to build "a meeting-house, in the neighborhood of Pompton, to be styled the 'Pompton and Wynockie Church.'" In due time that church was built, and, one month after his settlement at the Plains, was dedicated by Mr. Field. He preached a sermon from Psalm 132: 14-6, "This is my rest forever," etc. In this church Mr. Field preached every third Sabbath, the people of that section paying one third of his salary.

On March 18th, 1815, the people there, feeling the need of more services, met and

"Resolved, To make application to the Consistory of the Plains church for a separation from this congregation, for the purpose of making a new call upon Mr. Field for one half of his services in the Plains church and one half in the Pompton and Wynockie church, each paying one half of his stipulated salary."

To the application for a separation the Consistory, by resolution, consented. But, for some reason not mentioned, they refused to enter into any arrangement in regard to a new and joint call with them. Thereupon the Classis of Bergen was petitioned by them for a separate organization. This petition was granted, and the organization effected immediately thereafter, the members of Consistory taking the oath of office June 26th, 1815.

The two congregations, being unable to effect any satisfactory arrangement in regard to the joint services of Mr. Field, the Consistory of Pompton resolved, on the 12th of December, 1815, to call Mr. Field separately, and he accepted their invitation.

Thus his pastorate here was only a little over two years in length. During this time he received into the church twenty-nine persons. He subsequently labored at Pompton twelve years, and then served the Second Church of Totowa (Paterson) for four years. In 1832, he passed into the Presbyterian Church, and died in 1866.

Of the long difficulty and protracted litigation between the two congregations over the parsonage property, after their separation, I shall have nothing to say, thinking, as I do, that such feuds, carried on in such a spirit and to such an extent, are unworthy of the Church of God, and had far better be buried in the grave of forgetfulness.

REV. AVA NEAL.

After being vacant about two years, the church called the licentiate, Ava Neal. On the 9th of February, 1817, he was ordained and installed as Pastor. In this call the church of Fairfield united with the Plains church, and received one

third of his services. From 1817 to 1823, he continued to serve these two churches jointly. Then the Fairfield church, feeling the need of more services, released him, and he was retained by the Plains alone until July, 1828, through a pastorate of eleven years. During this time he received into the church seventy-eight souls. In 1829, he was suspended from the ministry; in 1833, he was restored, and died in 1839.

REV. ABRAHAM MESSLER, D.D.

After a vacancy of nine months, the Rev. Abraham Messler, who was then laboring as a missionary in North street, New-York City, was called, and on May 31st, 1829, was installed, the Rev. Philip Duryea, of English Neighborhood, preaching the sermon. In this call the Plains was joined by the Montville Church. After a pastorate of three and a half years, he received a call in October, 1832, to become the Pastor of the Church of Raritan, in Somerville, N. J. This people he continues to serve faithfully after a settlement of thirty-nine years.

During his ministry here, he welcomed to church-fellowship thirty-seven souls, thirty-two of this number being on confession of their faith.

REV. JAMES R. TALMAGE, D.D.

About two months after the removal of Mr. Messler, the church called the Rev. James R. Talmage, of Jersey City. He commenced his labors on the first Sabbath in February, 1833, and was installed as pastor on the 20th of the same month. During his pastorate of nearly four years, forty-five were received into the communion of the church, only two of the number being by certificate.

In November, 1836, having received and accepted a call from the Reformed Dutch Church, of Blawenburg, N. J., he removed from this place. He subsequently served Blawenburg, Athens, Middle Brooklyn, Greenbush, (in Glassis of Rennselaer,) Chittenango, and Napanock, the place of his present charge.

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REV. GARRET O. SCHANCK.

The church, now vacant, proffered a call to the Rev. Enoch Van Aken, but without success. But after eight months, Rev. Garret O. Schanck, of Clover Hill, N. J., was secured as Pastor. He preached his first sermon on the third Sabbath of July, 1837. For nearly fifteen and a half years he pleasantly and successfully served this people, gathering, as the fruits of his labors, into the fellowship of the church one hundred and twenty souls—seventy-eight on confession, and forty-four by certificate from other churches.

During his pastorate the Parsonage was rebuilt, a neat and commodious house, enjoyed by him and his successors as the result of his good management and hard work. In March, 1853, he resigned his call. Since that time he has had no settlement, though, with a heart to work for the Master, he holds himself always in readiness to serve the churches. (Appendix, Note 4.)

REV. CHARLES I. SHEPARD.

The church, again vacant, was soon supplied. For in June, 1853, the licentiate, Charles I. Shepard, accepted the call tendered to him, and on the second Tuesday of the following September was ordained and installed. A pastorate of five years strengthened the church with an addition of seventy-two souls. A large proportion of these were on confession of their faith in Christ, and from among the comparatively young. One of this number was the Rev. Samuel J. Rogers, who, with the Rev. John R. Brock, who was received by the next pastor, are the only ones, so far as we know, that have gone from the membership of this church into the ministry.

After laboring here for five years, for providential reasons, Mr. Shepard felt constrained to ask for a dissolution of the pastoral relation. On January 15th, 1858, he was dismissed by the Classis of Passaic to the church of Linlithgow, from which place he has since removed to the church of Newtown, L. I., where he is located at the present time.

REV. J. FERGUSON HARRIS.

He was succeeded by Rev. John Ferguson Harris, who was called the following month from Cold Spring, N. Y. Mr. Harris began his labors on the first Sabbath of March, 1858, and was installed on the 27th of the same month. Rev. B. V. Collins preached the sermon, and Rev. Joseph Wilson and Rev. J. C. Cruikshank delivered the charges respectively to pastor and people.

In the second year of his pastorate the church building was materially improved by the erection of a new pulpit, the frescoing of the walls, and handsome refurnishing, with the addition of a furnace.

To the membership of the church, during the nine years of his settlement, there were added sixty-two, nineteen of this number being by certificate. Having received a call from the churches of Hurley and North-Marbleton, which he considered his duty to accept, on the 26th of March, 1867, the Consistory united with him in an application to Classis for a dissolution of the relation existing between them. This he obtained, entered upon his new charge, and continues to serve them with acceptance.

The attention of the church having then been drawn to the graduates of the theological seminary at New-Brunswick, Mr. Nicholas J. M. Bogart, a licentiate of the Classis of New-Brunswick, was heard and called, but the call was not accepted.

REV. JOHN VAN NESTE SOHNENK.

Your present pastor was then called from Owaseo Outlet, near Auburn, N. Y., on the 14th of August, 1867, and entered upon his labors on the first Sabbath in October, being installed on the 23d day of the same month. The sermon was preached by Rev. George J. Van Neste, then of the church of West New-Hempstead, N. Y., and the charges to the pastor and people were delivered by the Rev. O. B. Durand and Rev. John N. Jansen. So that four years of the present relationship are just closed, with an ingathering, by the blessing of God, of seventy-eight souls, eleven of whom have come to us from other churches. (Appendix, Note 5.)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

Thus, during the *one hundred and thirty-five years* that this church has existed, there have been enrolled upon her records *eight hundred and eight* as the followers of Jesus, two hundred and twenty-five of whom are to-day in her communion, while this place has been employed in the worship of the Triune Jehovah for *one hundred years*.

Oh! what an army for God! And yet, who will say that this is the full measure of the church's success? Think of those who, in these seats, may have been trained for higher seats, and have gone up to them, who failed to give their names to the church. Think of those who have here been brought to Christ, and then gone to other places to live Christ and work for Christ. Think of much seed sown that has never yet yielded any thing, but at this very hour may be germinating, ere long to yield a glorious harvest.

And what do such encouraging thoughts, coupled with the actual success of the past, say to us to-day? Do they bid us rest here? Is there no *future* before us? Alas! in vain shall be this review to-day, unless in it we gather new motives, and catch new inspirations for *nobler living* and *harder work* for our Lord and Master. Let him who will think it a trivial thing to stand where we do to-day, yet it is not so. To be the sons of such sires as ours; to have the experience of over a century for study and profit; to have behind us the accumulated force of one hundred and thirty-five years to impel us; oh! not to go forward under such circumstances, is to prove ourselves *unworthy of our ancestry*, and of the *trust* which, through them, has descended to us.

As a *thank-offering to God for that which is past, and as a means of increased usefulness, by putting ourselves in a position of more commanding and far-reaching influence, we give this day, in dedication to God, a BEAUTIFUL AND ENLARGED SANCTUARY.*

This is well; but let us not stop here. This is only one move in the right direction, to be followed, I trust, by a *larger-hearted policy* than we ever yet have had thrown into all our purposes and plans of Christian living. A *more earnest spirit*

of prayer ; a more aggressive activity ; a more thorough consecration of self and all that we have to the work of God ; these are the things which alone, under God, will put the church abreast of the times, and make her the grandest success of the age.

How delightful the thought, my brethren, that we are *partners* with those who have gone before us, that we have taken up and are carrying forward what they left when God called them home. It is ours now to prove that those trusts have been committed to worthy hands, by acquitting ourselves like men. And then, when we in our turn shall be compelled to give way to others, we may hand over to them a *heritage* rich with age, beauty, and glory ; a *faith* kept inviolate ; and a *church* pure, sound, and strong.

APPENDIX.

NOTE 1, PAGE 6.—A copy of the deed, describing the boundaries of this tract, is still in existence.

NOTE 2, PAGE 8.—The Rev. Garret C. Schaich, referred to in the discourse, has kindly furnished the following statements. He writes, "I think there is scarcely a doubt that Pompton was brought to the notice of Arent Schuyler, from the fact of his going from New-York up to Minisink on some business (I think) with the Indians, a short time previous to his purchase of lands at Pompton. From the fact that the Minisink path ran along the Pompton Valley, and the nature of the country for miles on either hand renders improbable the existence of any other direct route, indicates that Schuyler, on that journey, passed through this valley, and so impressed him with the idea of its natural advantages that he soon took measures to secure the title to a large proportion of it. (There is a notice of this journey in the *Historical Documents of the State of New-York*.)

"It may be well to notice the fact why it was that certain families were of those who first settled at Pacquanac and the Plains. The larger number of these were related to each other by marriage. Thus the wife of Samuel Berry was Catharine Ryerson, sister of Josis, who, on the death of her first husband in 1702, married Paulus Van Derbeck in 1703.

"The mother of the Jones family, who first settled here, was a sister to Susanna Schriek, the wife of Antony Broekholst.

"Ann Schouten, the wife of Josis Ryerson, was the widow of Tunis Dey, and Sara Schouten (probably sister of Ann) married Jan Rycker. Jan Mead the first of the name who settled here, married Margaret Mandeville, sister of Hendrick, one of the first settlers.

"The wife of Peter Roome, the first of that family who settled here, was Anna Berry, daughter of Samuel Berry and Catharine Ryerson. This Peter Roome was a son of Peter Willimse Roome and Hesther Van Golden, thus allying these two families.

"The Mandeville family are descended from Giles Jansen Mandeville, who fled from Normandy, in France, to Holland, and there married a Dutch woman, Elsjie Hendricks, and came from Guelderland to New-York in 1647, and lived in what was called Thappanceonck, near what is now the foot of Twelfth street. His son Hendrick married first, on July 18th, 1680, Anotje Pieterse Scholl, and lived some time at Hempstead, L. I.; and on her death, married the second time, April 21st, 1690, Elizabeth Jane Berry, and about this time removed to and settled at Pacquanac. He died between 1700 and 1714, and left sons; by the first wife, David; and by the second, Hendrick, Johannes, and Giles. The second wife of Hendrick after his death married Brand Ja-

cobus, and had two sons, James and Abraham, the forefathers of the Jacobus family in this section.

"The first of the Slingerland family, Nicholas, it is said, came from up the North River, and became connected with the Roome family by marrying, Catalyntje, daughter of Peter Roome and Anna Berry.

"The Van Ness family of this section of country are descended from Simon Van Ness. His first wife was probably Rachel Van Donsen, and they were living at Schenectady in 1689-90, when that place was destroyed by the Indians, and that night had a child born, Annetje, who subsequently married James Jacobus, and lived to the age of ninety-eight years and nine months. On the death of the first wife, Mr. Van Ness married, on December 10th, 1700, Hesther De Lachater, and about the date of his second marriage he settled at Fairfield, N. J. He had sons—Hendrick, who settled on the Plains; Isaac at Fairfield; Simon, at Pompton; and Evert, probably at Little Falls.

"The De Bow family came from New-York at a later date, probably about 1727, as in that year, on the 23d of May, Garret De Bow married Maria, the second daughter of Paulus Van Derboek, and probably soon after settled here.

"The De Mott family came from Bergen, and at a later date still, 1740, Hendrick De Mott, or his father Michael, purchased land on the Plains, and soon after that settled here.

"The Doremus family were not among the original settlers here, and what was the name of the forefather in this country we can not state. But as far as we can ascertain, they came from Middleburg, on the Island of Zealand, in Holland, about the year 1685, and settled at Acquackanonk. There appear to have been four brothers, Johannes, Thomas, Hendrick, and Josias; Johannes was born in Holland, and the others in this country, at Acquackanonk. He married August 9th, 1710, Elizabeth Ackerman; Thomas married, October 4th, 1712, Anneke Abrahamse Ackerman; Hendrick married, April 14th, 1714, Annetje Essels; Josias married, March 10th, 1717, Maritzo Bordan. Johannes lived at Preakness, and died between 1754-8, leaving a son Cornelius, who is probably the one that lived at Parsippany, and from whom probably the greater part of that name in this valley are descended."

NOTE 3, PAGE 10.—The author has borrowed many of the facts in the biographies of several of the Pastors of this church from Corwin's *Manual of the Reformed Church in America*.

NOTE 4, PAGE 22.—"There was in former years within the bounds of this congregation a large amount of *intemperance*. And I can state it as a melancholy fact, that of men grown who died, and whose funerals I attended during my pastorate, about half of these deaths could be ascribed immediately or remotely to the intemperate use of intoxicating drinks. Active and successful efforts to arrest the tide of intemperance were begun by the Rev. James R. Talmage, during his pastorate, against prejudice and indifference, nobly seconded by some of his members.

"These efforts were continued and carried on during my pastorate. We had an organized society, of which I was secretary; had regular meetings for business, and at frequent intervals held public meetings to listen to addresses by ministers and others. The result was a happy change for the be-

ness of the people. Scarcely any one, during this time, fell into intemperate habits, and nearly all who then composed the youth of the congregation signed the temperance pledge. Many of these are now active and useful members of the church, superintendents of Sabbath-schools, helpers in prayer-meetings and other good works, and some of them useful ministers of the Gospel." G. C. S.

NOTE 5, PAGE 23.—On the 4th of October, 1871, a great company of mourners joined in the sad funeral rites of the Rev. Mr. Schenk at the Reformed church of Pompton, N. J. This church (Rev. J. N. Jansen, pastor) had been kindly offered, as the condition of the Plains church, on account of the enlargement, did not allow its use. The vast concourse of clergy, and friends of his late charge, and from other surrounding churches not only, but from Paterson, Newark, and other places, proved how extensively he was honored in life and lamented in death. The Classis of Passaic, in session on the day previous, passed resolutions of condolence, and adjourned to attend the funeral in a body. Rev. E. P. Terhune, D.D., of Newark, preached an excellent sermon from Psalm 77: 19, "Thy way is in the sea," etc. It was full of comfort amid the mysterious providence which had stricken down, so early in life, one so useful and full of bright hope for the future. He bore the eloquent tribute of warm personal affection. His remains were temporarily deposited in the cemetery of the church of Pompton Plains, but in due time will be transferred to Greenwood Cemetery, Long Island.

Mr. Schenk was born near South-Branch, Somerset Co., N. J., February 21st, 1842.

At ten years of age his Christian mother died, and at her dying request he became a member of the family of Rev. George J. Van Neste. He pursued his preparatory studies at the Classical Institute of Ovid, Seneca Co., N. Y.; entered Rutgers College September 20th, 1858; was hopefully converted during the Junior year, and united with the Reformed Church of Lodi, N. Y., July 12th, 1861. He entered the Theological Seminary at New-Brunswick, N. J., September, 1862; was licensed by the Classis of Geneva in May, 1865, and ordained to the Gospel ministry by the Classis of Cayuga, September 28th, 1865, in the Reformed Church at Owaseo Outlet, near Auburn, N. Y.

At the close of just two years of a fruitful ministry, he accepted a call to the Pompton Plains church, and was duly installed to his work there October 28d, 1867.

His death occurred, after about three weeks' sickness with bilious remitting fever, on the night of September 28th, 1871, precisely six years from the day of his ordination, aged twenty-nine years, seven months, and seven days.

His preaching, as to its substance, was sound evangelical truth, faithful to the doctrine of Christ crucified, as the only meritorious ground of salvation, but applied in all its practical ramifications. He was firm in this course, and was an enemy to all trickery in the pulpit. He was no truckling trimmer, subservient to the wishes of the self-righteous and the worldly-wise.

His manner was that of the earnest man whose heart was in his work. At times he grew bold and fearless in his enthusiastic utterances of God's word yet he always "spoke the truth in love" as the servant of Christ. And hence he always gained the ready attention of his audiences wherever he was called

to preach. He commonly used his manuscript; yet in his unwritten addresses few excelled him.

His success was due also, in a good degree, to his social qualities. With a generous and charitable nature, he was genial, kind, and winning. It is not surprising, therefore, that he made many friends, especially among the young and that his warm sympathies were poured out in the pastoral work of the sick-chamber, at the burial services, and in comforting mourners in Zion, both the bereaved, the care-worn, and the sin-sick.

In his short ministry of just six years, the Lord gave him unusual success. The Church at Owasco Outlet was greatly strengthened by the addition of a goodly number of new-born souls, and in cementing the divisive elements of that small congregation. Outside of his own parish he was a prominent worker in the Bible, Temperance, and other benevolent enterprises. At Pompton Plains, he and his people were favored with a blessed revival, which resulted in the hopeful conversion in one year of more than fifty souls. The attendance upon the sanctuary services was so greatly increased, that larger accommodations must be provided, or the work of the Lord must be contracted, and souls perish for lack of it. His large Christian heart could not endure this. The completion and reopening of the greatly enlarged and beautified house of the Lord was his joyous anticipation. He had made all the arrangements for that hallowed service. He had prepared, written in a neat hand, the full history, as contained in this pamphlet, of this church, and had solicited all of his living predecessors to come with their memorials on that occasion. His life, it is believed, was a sacrifice to this whole work, needful for the growth of the church. In its execution, his eye was single to the honor of his Lord and Master. In God's wonderful providence, his eyes were not privileged to see this result of his faithful efforts, but "he rests from his labors, and his works do follow him."

G. J. V. N.

CONSISTORIAL ACTION.

"Whereas, It has pleased Almighty God, in the execution of his wise yet to us mysterious purpose, to remove by death our Pastor, Rev. John Van Neste Schenk, who has faithfully ministered to us in spiritual things for four years; therefore,

"Resolved, That in this sudden bereavement, we are impressed most deeply with the fact, which God has revealed concerning himself, that his ways are not as our ways; yet, recognizing that our Pastor was God's child, and that he has an unquestionable right to do what he will with his own, we bow in humble, reverent submission to the divine will, well assured that it is right because God himself has done it.

"Resolved, That, in our gratitude to God who gave him to us, and out of respect to his memory which we cherish, we record our testimony to his worth as a minister, in his oneness of aim in distributing the word of life, as a pastor in his earnest efforts to feed and watch over the flock of Christ, and as a Christian, in the illustration his example furnishes of the doctrines of grace which he believed and faithfully preached.

"Resolved, That, in the sudden termination of his earthly life, just as he was ripening for usefulness and efficiency in the Master's service, in the midst of plans which were in process of accomplishment, and with purposes formed

and expressed for the prosecution of his ministerial labors, we hear the voice of God admonishing us to work ; ' for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.'

"*Resolved*, That while in this providence, we, as a church, are afflicted and stricken of God, we are not unmindful of the heavy sorrow which his partner in life is called to bear, in the death of a faithful and devoted husband, and desire hereby to express our sympathies with her in this bereavement, and to commend her for consolation and support to our covenant God, who graciously invites us to 'call upon him in the day of trouble.'

"*Resolved*, That these resolutions be entered upon our Minutes, and a copy be sent to Mrs. Schenk, and to the *Christian Intelligencer* for publication."

DEDICATORY SERVICES.

The church building had been lengthened by the addition of thirteen and one half feet, with the pulpit in a recess. Thirty new pews were thus formed. The whole interior was tastefully frescoed, painted, and refurnished. On the 22d of November, 1871, the church, appropriately draped in mourning, was filled with deeply-interested worshippers at the reopening exercises. The devotional services were conducted by Rev. John N. Jansen, of Pompton ; Rev. Charles L. Shepard, of Newtown, L. I. ; Rev. J. F. Harris, of Hurley, N. Y. ; Rev. Garret C. Schanck, of Monmouth, N. J. ; and Rev. Paul D. Van Cleaf, D.D., of Jersey City, N. J. By request of the Consistory of the Church, Rev. George J. Van Neste, of Little Falls, N. J., read the historical discourse prepared by the late pastor.

In the afternoon, three of the five former Pastors brought their memorial tributes of affection. Rev. Abraham Messler, D.D., and Rev. James R. Talmage, D.D., were not able to be present. Revs. Schanck, Shepard, and Harris, each related incidents of their preaching and pastoral work, which greatly interested and profited their numerous hearers. The offices of prayer, reading the Scriptures and the hymns of praise, were performed by Rev. John Steele, of Paterson, and Rev. S. T. Searle, of Wyckoff, N. J.

In the evening, the Classis of Passaic held a Convention in behalf of the Centennial effort now being made in our Denomination to raise a memorial fund of one million of dollars. Rev. Dr. P. D. Van Cleaf gave an address replete with historical facts and arguments, which made their practical appeal to the large congregation present. Brief addresses were also made by the former pastors present, and Revs. L. H. Van Doren and G. J. Van Neste.

By request of the Consistory, Rev. G. J. Van Neste preached a sermon on the following Sabbath, from the text, Psalm 122 : 7, which their late pastor had chosen for this purpose.

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