

One of Cromwell's Officers Sleeps in Welsh Tract Cemetery

PERHAPS few Delawareans know that an officer of Cromwell's army sleeps in the cemetery adjoining the old Welsh Tract meeting house, at Iron Hill, a short distance from Newark. Yet this is a fact, according to history. The story is told, in a clipping from the Philadelphia Press, printed in the 70's, which a reader of Every Evening has sent this paper for republication. The article deals with the history of Welsh Tract and the church there, as well as the burying ground. It reads as follows:

It is like stepping back into the last century to attend a service at the old Welsh Tract meeting house on Iron Hill, in the northern part of Delaware. The quaint little church, built of imported brick, rather larger than that now in use: the sleepy, old-fashioned graveyard with its low stone wall; and even the congregation, entering at separate doors, the women on one side and the men on the other, hardly seem to belong to this bustling generation. Inside the illusion is still more complete. The wooden benches are straight-backed and uncomfortable, and make the services seem interminably long. There is no musical instrument allowed in the church, and the hymns, sung always in long metre, are "raised" by one of the deacons. From the pulpit, the elder, as the preacher "expounds the Scripture" with an energy and picturesqueness that often rises to real eloquence. The history of the little church is as interesting as its appearance. It was first built nearly 200 years ago by a congregation of Welsh Primitive Baptists, on a strip of land purchased from William Penn, and still known as the Welsh Tract. They were kindred to the Welsh who had settled around Bryn Mawr and Merion. The bricks were landed at New Castle, on the Delaware, and carried to the site of the church, eleven miles distant, on mules, a doughty Welshman walking beside each animal to keep the panniers in place. At the time of the Revolution, the church had already attained, for this country, a respectable antiquity, and is frequently mentioned both by British and American writers of that time. It is said that Washington rode by it several times, and there is an old legend of a headless horseman who dashes down the hill on moonlight nights.

The Early Records.

For many years the services were all in Welsh, but a careful record of all the church doings was kept in both languages in a large leather-

bound volume, the leaves of which are now stained and yellow with age, though the writing is still clear and distinct. When, as at present, the church is without a preacher, a portion of this record, reports of sermons whose authors have long since crumbled to dust, and accounts of conventions where the niceties of faith were regulated, is read to the congregation. The story of the founding of the church is told in quaint language:—

"In the year 1701 some of us who were members of the Church of Jesus Christ, in the Counties of Pembroke and Caermarthen, South Wales, in Great Britain, professing in baptism; laying on of hands, election and final perseverance in grace; were moved and encouraged in our minds to come to these parts, viz: Pennsylvania, and after obtaining leave of the churches, it seemed good to the Lord, and to us, that we should be formed into church orders; as we were a sufficient number and as one of us was a minister that was accomplished, and withal letters commendatory were given us, that if we should meet with any congregation of church people, who held the same faith with us, we might be received by them as brethren in Christ.

"Our number was sixteen. After bidding farewell to our brethren in Wales we sailed from Milford Haven in the month of June, the year above mentioned, in a ship named the James and Mary and landed in Philadelphia the 8th of September following. After landing we were received in a loving manner (on account of the Gospel) by the congregation meeting in Philadelphia and Pennypek who held the same faith with us (excepting the order of laying on of hands on every particular member) with whom we wished much to hold communion at the Lord's table, but we could not be in fellowship with them in the Lord's Supper, because they love not testimony for God touching the aforementioned ordinance.

"After our arrival we lived much scattered about for a year and a half, yet kept up our weekly and monthly meetings among ourselves, during which time it pleased God to add to our numbers about twenty members, in which time, we and many other Welsh people purchased a tract of land in Newcastle County on the Delaware, which was called the 'Welsh Tract.' In the year 1703 we began to get our living out of it and to

Continued on page 9.

Called for the minutes to be read. Motion made and carried to adopt minutes as read.

This brings to a close the business part of the association. We had lunch both days. After lunch, met back in church house by singing. Had preaching by Elder C. H. Frazier for which we all were made to rejoice.

Next day, Sunday, met on appointed time. After song service we had preaching by Elder C. H. Frazier and Elder H. J. White and the service was closed by the Moderator, Elder Guss J. Broadway.

CIRCULAR LETTER

To you dear children of God who read this minutes. If you were not there you missed seeing the bountiful storehouse of love and spiritual revelation revealed by the called servants of God who stood before us. We take this opportunity to thank the Liberty Church and the surrounding community for their effect in making this Association a success.

Our Next Union Meeting will be held with Liberty Primitive Baptist Church, Hickman County, Tennessee, beginning on Friday July 1, lasting 3 days. Elder Guss J. Broadway is to preach the introductory Sermon. We invite all to be with us.

ELDER GUSS J. BROADWAY, Moderator
DELPHA BROADWAY, Clerk

Rt. 6, Linden, Tenn.; Ph. 589-4456
c/o Loyd Ward

HOME MINISTER

Elder Guss J. Broadway, Rt. 6, Linden, Tenn.; c/o Loyd Ward
Phone 589-4456

CHURCH STATISTICAL TABLE

LIBERTY—One mile east of Cobal, Tenn. on Hwy. 50, 12 miles southwest of Centerville, Tenn. Pastor: Elder Guss J. Broadway, Linden, Tenn. Clerk: Clarence Springer, Centerville, Tenn. Deacons: Richard Kelley, Pleasantville, Tenn.; Clarence Springer, J. C. Poore, Centerville, Tenn.. Contribution, \$25.00. Meeting time, 1st Sun., singing 10:30.

(4)

Preaching, 11:00 a. m. Communion, 1st Sunday in July. Will entertain union meeting this year. Membership, 33.

CEDAR CREEK—12 miles southwest of Linden, Tenn., on the Clifton Rd., 8 miles south of Hwy. 70, Pope Grade School. Pastor: Elder Guss J. Broadway, Linden, Tenn. Clerk: Mrs. Maggie Ward, Linden, Tenn. Deacons: Loyd Ward, Ollie Black, Imman, Coy Richardson, Linden, Tenn. Contribution, \$30.00. Meeting time, 4th Sunday and Sat. before. Communion, 4th Sunday in May and August. Singing 10:30; preaching 11:00 a. m. Membership, 38. Will entertain Association this year.

SALEM—1 mile east of Topsy, Tenn., off of Hwy. 48 between Hohenwald and Waynesboro, Tenn. Pastor: Elder Guss J. Broadway, Linden, Tenn. Clerk: Mrs. Delphia Broadway. Deacons: Clifford Meridith, Clement Meridith, Waynesboro, Tenn. Meeting time, 3rd Sunday. Communion, 3rd Sunday in May and Aug. Homecoming every 3rd Sunday in September.

(5)

CROMWELL OFFICER'S GRAVE AT IRON HILL

(Continued from page 8)
build a place of worship, which was commonly known as the Baptist Meeting House on Iron Hill."

The Original Members.

Delaware was still, at this time, a part of Pennsylvania. The sixteen original members of the congregation, most of whom have left descendants in that part of the country, were Thomas Griffith, minister; Griffith Nichols, Evan Edmond, Mary John, Mary Thomas, John Edward, Elizabeth Griffiths, Lewis Edmond, Elizabeth Griffith, Shonnet (or Jennet) David, Margaret Mathias, Shonnet Morris, James David, Elizcus (Elisha) Thomas, Enoch Morgan, Righan (Richard) David.

The church was not without its troubles. There was another Welsh church in the neighborhood, the Pencader Presbyterian Church in Glasgow, and this church, it would seem, was more attractive to the younger members of the congregation. Many were the complaints made against members for attending this church. The rebellion of Martha David against the church in 1732 is especially interesting, because she was the mother of President Davis, of Princeton College.

Earthly Interests Regulated.

In those days the church looked after the material as well as the spiritual welfare of its members.

The church was rebuilt in 1746 as it now stands, the original materials being used in construction, and it is still in a good state of preservation. The old graveyard is one of the most romantic spots in the State, and is a favorite haunt of the Summer visitor. Here one can spend hours poking among old gravestones trying to spell out the fast crumbling inscriptions and inventing romances about people whose descendants of the sixth generation are still living in the neighborhood and bearing, perhaps, the very same names.

One of Cromwell's Officers.

The most interesting grave in the place is that of Reese Ryddarcks, who was, according to tradition, an officer in Cromwell's army and emigrated to this country at the age of 81 years. His tombstone contains the only Latin inscription in the graveyard. The stone is small, scarcely two feet high, and blackened with age, so that the inscription is scarcely decipherable. It was once published in Harper's Magazine as a specimen of old Welsh. It is as follows:—

Riceus Rythrough
Natus, apud Ffanwenogg
In Comitahe Cardigan
Et hic sepuleus fuit.
Au. Dom., 1707.
Aetatis fuisse, 87.

"Reese Ryddarcks, born at Hanwenog, in the County of Cardigan, and here was buried in the year A. D., 1707, being 87 years of age."

"A modest and unassuming tombstone marks the last resting place of this hero of many battles, who sleeps his last sleep on the northern slope of Iron Hill, near which the murmuring waters of the Christiana have sung his requiem for more than a century and three-quarters." Horatio McClean Jones, of St. Louis, has collected notes and memoranda concerning the descendants of Morgan ap Rhydderch and his wife Jane, the parents of Reese Ryddarcks. He is a cousin of the late Horatio Gates Jones of Philadelphia, who was also much interested in this little church.

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