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Abstract

The earliest European settlers in today's Adams county were basically a religious people. While probably most of them should not be described as particularly pious, they did have the fear of the Lord in their hearts and wanted to have access to the services of some religious organization, either the one to which they were accustomed in Europe or one with which they had affiliated in America. If they belonged to groups such as the Quakers, Mennonites, or Brethren, it was easy for them to develop internally the leadership necessary to function successfully as a religious community. If they were Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Lutherans, or Reformed, at least they hoped to be able to rely upon a learned and properly ordained clergy to preach, administer the sacraments, and perform other duties which they had come to expect of their religious leaders.

Once in Pennsylvania, laymen of all but the most recently formed religious bodies encountered something new to their experience. There simply were no long-existing church buildings, schools, or religious authorities. In a province which imposed very few restrictions on one's religious freedom, there were also no laws either permitting or requiring the provincial government to expend money for church and school buildings or to secure and support ministers. This meant that if the early settlers in Adams county wanted to have churches and schools, they would need to rely on private efforts to secure them. Since there continued to be a severe shortage of learned and properly ordained clergymen in Pennsylvania long after the close of the colonial period, much of the responsibility for establishing religious institutions rested upon laymen, for whom this was a new and often difficult task. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Adams County Historical Society, ACHS, Adams County, Pennsylvania History, Local Church, Religion, Parishioners

Some Early Adams County Communities, Their Churches, and Church Lands*

by Charles H. Glatfelter

The earliest European settlers in today's Adams county were basically a religious people. While probably most of them should not be described as particularly pious, they did have the fear of the Lord in their hearts and wanted to have access to the services of some religious organization, either the one to which they were accustomed in Europe or one with which they had affiliated in America. If they belonged to groups such as the Quakers, Mennonites, or Brethren, it was easy for them to develop internally the leadership necessary to function successfully as a religious community. If they were Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Lutherans, or Reformed, at least they hoped to be able to rely upon a learned and properly ordained clergy to preach, administer the sacraments, and perform other duties which they had come to expect of their religious leaders.

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*Among those who assisted in the preparation of this paper, Arthur Weaner must be mentioned first. His work in preparing the map of part of the Bermudian settlement was absolutely indispensable in enhancing the reader's understanding of the settlement and, particularly, where the Anglicans lived in it. James P. Myers, Jr., the editor of this journal, shared with me both insights and documents resulting from his own research in the history of Bermudian in the eighteenth century. As always, the staffs of the York County Archives and of the Historical Society of York County have been most patient and helpful in responding to my many requests for help. Members of the staffs of the Lutheran Theological Seminary Library at Gettysburg; Cumberland County Historical Society; Dickinson College Archives; Princeton University Archives; and Lambeth Palace Library, London, England, were also helpful.

in Pennsylvania long after the close of the colonial period, much of the responsibility for establishing religious institutions rested upon laymen, for whom this was a new and often difficult task.

Although there is much we do not know, and may never know, about the circumstances of the earliest religious services in Adams county, certainly they occurred before there were church buildings. There is evidence that some people built a schoolhouse first and then used it for worship services until they were able to do something more. Others began by using the houses and barns of one or more members. If the people were Mennonite or Brethren, they might be content with such facilities for many years. The first Upper Conewago Brethren meeting house in Adams county was not built until the congregation had been in existence for a century or more. But arrangements such as these were not satisfactory for Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Lutherans, or Reformed. In Europe, they had been accustomed to having buildings specifically designed as churches. Once in Pennsylvania, they also wanted to have what they could call churches, even if they were much smaller and simpler than what they had always known at home.

* * *

Not only were the Penn proprietors major participants in the government of provincial Pennsylvania, but they were also the landlords with whom the first claimants upon their acres had to deal. Under the rules which the Penns established, three steps were required to obtain a clear and full title to one's real estate. The first was to purchase a warrant, which was a directive to a surveyor commissioned by the provincial land office to determine the metes and bounds which the purchaser was claiming. While the Penns would undoubtedly have preferred that every person secure a warrant at the time of settlement, they had no way of enforcing such a requirement. Years, sometimes decades, were permitted to separate settlement and warrant.

Since few colonial churches, and none in Adams county, were incorporated, land had to be purchased and then held by persons who were acting as trustees for the congregations of which they were members. The amounts of land specified in the warrants varied widely. Although only a few acres were in fact required for a church, schoolhouse, and burying ground, some congregations purchased many more, most of which could then be used for what was often called the glebe. The income from the extra acres might help support a minister or a schoolmaster.

The second step in securing land, either for an individual or for a congregation, was for the surveyor to determine the actual courses and distances of the purchase, in such a way that it did not interfere with the claims of previous or contemporary claimants. Usually a surveyor appeared soon after being informed a warrant had been purchased. Until he did his work and then provided a purchaser with a copy of it, the settler could not know with any certainty where his boundaries were and how many acres they enclosed. Surveyed acreage rarely corresponded with that called for in the warrant, but this was not a matter of concern, since a reckoning of balances still owed, with other charges, would be made at some future date.

Clearly, many persons, including congregations, regarded the copy of a survey in their actual possession as sufficient evidence of ownership, even though it was obviously not a deed and did not confer a clear and full title upon its holder. Just as the Penns did not normally insist that one take out a warrant at the time of settlement, they did not insist on prompt payment of all remaining charges once a survey had been made and the acquisition of a patent deed. There were times in the nineteenth century when, in order to increase its income, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (which seized control of most remaining Penn family land rights during the Revolution) took steps to urge or coax owners to complete their titles. The urgent need for more revenue explains why the legislature passed such a law in 1864 and why so many patent deeds were issued in the fall of that year.

The following examples, drawn from the experiences of six colonial Adams county congregations, illustrate the variety of ways by which their members undertook to initiate and then complete ownership of the land on which their first churches stood. All of these examples begin with some congregational activity as early as the 1730s or 1740s.

The Conewago Settlement

The part of Adams county to be occupied first, in the 1730s, was the southeastern section. Because the south branch of the Conewago creek flowed through it from south to north, this area was widely known as the Conewago settlement. In 1739 the Lancaster county court established a public road which began at the site of the present Wrightsville and stretched for some thirty-five miles west and south through the present York, Spring Grove, Hanover, and Littlestown to the province

line. Known as the Monocacy road, this thoroughfare was used by thousands of immigrants who passed through the settlement on their way to new homes in western Maryland, Virginia, or the Carolinas.

At a time when the boundary line between Pennsylvania and Maryland was in serious dispute, the Maryland proprietor in 1727 granted a warrant for 10,000 acres to John Digges, a man who already had sizable landholdings in that province. No survey was made for him until five years later. When a temporary boundary line was drawn in 1739, it was found that his 6,822 acres were all in what is now Pennsylvania, extending roughly from Hanover to Littlestown. A second, and illegal, survey made in 1745 increased the size of what was known as Digges' Choice to 10,501 acres.²

In increasing financial difficulties and eager to gain an income from the sale of his lands, Digges welcomed purchasers of many faiths. Within a few years there were Roman Catholics (he was a Catholic), Lutherans, Reformed, and Mennonites living near each other in Conewago. All of the available evidence indicates that, while members of these faiths were often hostile to each other in Europe, here they lived together in relative harmony.

There is a longstanding tradition, but one not substantiated by reliable evidence, that early Roman Catholic services were held in a house located on the property of Robert Owings, a friend and neighbor of Digges. On March 23, 1743, the Penn proprietors issued a warrant for 100 acres at the "mouth of Plumb Creek on Little Conewago" to Henry Neal, a Jesuit priest who was then pastor of the Catholic church in Philadelphia. The warrant neither identified Neal (whose name was usually spelled Neale) as a clergyman nor made any reference to the fact that the warranted land was intended to be used for religious purposes, but it was here that the first Conewago chapel was built, probably a few years before a survey of 141 acres 116 perches was made on April 21, 1744. Note that although Digges and Owings both held their land under the authority of the Maryland proprietors, the chapel was built on land which the Penn proprietors had warranted and surveyed.³

Henry Neale died in Philadelphia in 1748. After that a succession of Jesuit priests held the warranted and surveyed, but as yet unpatented, land in trust, even long after the oldest section of the present church (given the name Sacred Heart of Jesus) was built in the 1780s. Finally, on November 22, 1837, the Commonwealth issued a patent deed to the Reverend William McSherry, Georgetown, D.C., "Superior of the society of Jesuits in trust for said society." The Jesuits controlled Conewago

chapel until 1901. In 1962 Pope John XXIII conferred upon the church the honor and dignity of a minor basilica.

* * *

In May 1735 a German Lutheran pastor living near the present New Holland in Lancaster county, John Casper Stoever, included the Conewago settlement in regular visits he began making as far south as Virginia. Between 1735 and 1742 he baptized more than sixty children in Conewago, most of whom were born to Lutheran parents, but some to Reformed.⁴

When the Lutherans, with Stoever's assistance, eventually organized a congregation in 1743, it was the one which is today represented by St. Matthew's church in Hanover. The Reformed organized about two years later and are now represented by Christ United Church of Christ, east of Littlestown.

On September 10, 1750, the Penn proprietors issued a warrant to Michael Will (in this case, as with Henry Neale, he was the sole trustee) for 50 acres of land, for the use of the Reformed congregation at "Little Conewago." It took more than eight years for the surveyor to come. When he did, on March 22, 1759, which may well have been about the time the first church was built, he set aside 37 acres for the use of the congregation. A patent deed for this acreage was granted to four trustees, but not until May 25, 1774. Thus it took the Conewago Reformed about a quarter century to go from warrant to patent, far less than it did for the Conewago Catholics.

The Marsh Creek Settlement

About 1740 some 150 Scotch-Irish Presbyterian families located in central Adams county, in an area which was widely known as the Marsh Creek settlement. There are no precise boundaries for any of the many colonial settlements in Pennsylvania. One might consider this one as extending from near Hunterstown in the east to near Fairfield in the west. A road which the Lancaster county court ordained in 1747 and which ran westward through the present Abbottstown, New Oxford, Gettysburg, and Fairfield was known as the Marsh Creek road.

Almost as soon as they arrived in Adams county, these Scotch-Irish settlers turned, in June 1740, to an already existing church judicatory,

the Donegal Presbytery, with a request that it designate a minister to supply them with preaching and the sacraments. In April 1742 they asked the same presbytery to send several of its members to help decide where to locate their proposed meetinghouse. The visitors concluded there were already enough families in the settlement to justify recommending formation of two congregations, each with its own meetinghouse. Those in the western part promptly organized the Marsh Creek congregation; those in the eastern part, the Great Conewago congregation.⁵

The Marsh Creek church was located within the Manor of Maske, a tract of 43,500 acres of land which the Penns had set apart in 1741, but which the sustained opposition of the settlers made it impossible for them to survey until an accommodation was reached a quarter century later.⁶

Finally, on May 25, 1765, the Penns issued a warrant for 100 acres to four trustees of "the presbyterian Congregation in the Manor of Maske and Township of Cumberland." The warrant stated that "a Meetinghouse was erected by the said Congregation on a Tract of One hundred Acres of Land . . . about Eighteen Years ago which has been ever since used and enjoyed by them." On January 8, 1766, they were presented with a survey of 157 acres, 34 perches of land.

Even though the proprietors and settlers in the manor had reached an agreement ending their dispute and most tracts were surveyed in the 1760s, only a few actual deeds were issued until after the Revolution. Since the 1779 legislation depriving the Penns of their remaining land rights in Pennsylvania allowed them to retain their manors, any land-owners within these tracts wishing to secure a deed after that date had to deal with members of the Penn family, not the Commonwealth.

For one reason or another, the Upper Marsh Creek congregation still had no deed when it decided to move into the borough of Gettysburg. By their agents, the Penns granted deeds to persons who had purchased the property from the congregation: to Con Menough for 134 acres, 147 perches on February 5, 1811, and to John Galloway and John Houck for 25 acres, 116 perches on June 9, 1829. In selling the glebe land, it was the intention of the Gettysburg Presbyterian church, the successor congregation, to retain possession of its old graveyard, known as Black's cemetery. Since it could not be demonstrated from known deeds, both recorded and unrecorded, that such ownership had ever been reserved, either when the smaller of the two tracts was first sold or when it later passed from one owner to another, on February 26, 1980, the church purchased from the then owners the graveyard tract, containing 1.381 acres.⁷

The Bermudian Settlement

Some of the earliest land claims and actual settlements in Adams county were made in its northern section, much of which is drained by the Bermudian creek and its tributaries. The Bermudian flows east, paralleling and finally emptying into the Conewago creek (in colonial times often called the Great or Big Conewago) at the line between Washington and Warrington townships in York county.

It was long-established Penn family policy not to issue actual warrants for land in an area until they had made a treaty with the Indians, one which the Penns regarded as extinguishing the claims of the Indians to that area. Although the Penns did permit, and in ways even encourage, some settlement west of the Susquehanna river before the treaty of October 1736, the first warrants for land within Adams county were not issued until January 1738.⁸ Nine of the first ten which were granted between then and June 1738 were for land in the northern section of the county. They were for a total of some 3,300 acres, either in or near what was sometimes called the Bermudian settlement. Not all of the warrants resulted in surveys and patent deeds, but most did.

Some indication of the importance which the proprietors and their agents attached to this area is conveyed by the fact that none of the first three townships created in Adams county was in either Conewago or Marsh Creek, but in the Bermudian settlement. Huntington, Tyrone, and Menallen townships were in existence when the Lancaster county commissioners met in December 1745 to levy county taxes for the following year. An early road, known as the Menallen road, skirted the southern part of the settlement. It entered the county at East Berlin and continued west through Heidlersburg. In colonial times its western terminus was near the Menallen meeting house on 'Possum Creek, then located east of Biglerville. Just when the Lancaster or possibly York county court established this highway is unknown.⁹

As already noted, most of the early settlers in Marsh Creek were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. Sharing the diversity of early Conewago, the Bermudian settlement attracted English and Irish Quakers and Anglicans, as well as German Lutherans, Reformed, and Brethren. The available evidence indicates that these people, as did those in Conewago, lived in relative harmony with each other. One need only read the estate papers of the early residents to learn the extent to which they often relied on friends and neighbors with ethnic backgrounds different from their own.

* * *

In the early 1740s a small group of German Lutherans and Reformed located in and around Huntington township. Somehow learning that a Reformed pastor was about to visit the newly founded town of York, they prevailed upon him to pay them a visit too. The Rev. Jacob Lischy preached, baptized four children, and may also have administered communion. The day on which this occurred, March 19, 1745, is taken to mark the beginning of the Bermudian church, a union church which for a century and a quarter accommodated both Lutheran and Reformed congregations. There is no evidence of activity by a Lutheran pastor in the area for about three years after Lischy began his ministry there.¹⁰

Sometime after 1758, when a new Lutheran pastor took charge at Bermudian, he began a register for the church. Rev. Lucas Raus composed what is a rare and invaluable historical statement about the church's beginnings and then had it inscribed on the register's title page:

Church Book of the Reformed and Evangelical Lutheran congregations, both true Protestant churches in accordance with the Word of God on the Bermudian in Huntington Township in the Province of Pennsylvania.

On the 19th day of March and in the Year of our Lord 1745 at the dwelling of Henrich Weidenbach under the open sky they first met and organized. Afterward in the houses and barns of Johannes Asper Senior and others they increased and continued. Until at last both churches of Christ, by unanimous and brotherly voice, decided, on the Christlike offer of a member of the Reformed Church, Jacob Heens, who for love of the worship of God, of his own free will, offered and bestowed 2 Acres of land, for a Union Reformed and Evangelical Lutheran Church, to build one such church, that the Word of God might be preached therein clearly and in its purity, and the Holy Sacraments might be administered in a devout and orderly manner, according to the institution of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and as is truly in accord with both faiths as is set forth in their Symbolical Books and held acceptable.

For this praiseworthy purpose was also this church, Reformed and Evangelical Lutheran, built, according to the Word of God; and on the 15th of April in the year 1754, by the Right Reverend Herr Pastor Bacher of the Lutheran Church and the Herr Pastor Jacob Lischy of the Reformed Church, was solemnly and reverently dedicated, and devoted to the One Triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Ghost - and consecrated to His honor: . . .¹¹

The Raus statement that Jacob Heens (spelled Hen in other contemporary documents) not only offered, but also bestowed, 2 acres of land on which to build the first Bermudian church is clear enough. However, there is no credible evidence to support it, in the form of a deed, warrant, or survey. Only when the two congregations decided in the 1790s that a new church building was needed did they agree that some substantial written evidence of their ownership of the property was also needed.

On November 6, 1793, Jacob Comly and his wife gave a deed for 2 acres of land (that amount specified in the Raus statement) to four church trustees, two Lutheran and two Reformed. The deed recited that the 2 acres were part of a tract warranted to Jacob Bowman on March 5, 1744, and sold to Jacob Hen in 1763, to George Haegele in 1764, to Jacob Kinzer in 1772, and to Comly in 1790. The Bowman, Hen, and Kinzer deeds were recorded; none refers to a church standing on the property.¹²

Both Jacob Bowman and Jacob Hen were members of the Bermudian church. Two of the four children Jacob Lischy baptized on March 19, 1745, were theirs. Later he baptized two other Bowman and three other Hen children. Jacob Hen did get a warrant in 1750 for 50 acres located south of the Bowman land, but not adjoining the church property. Both men appear to have left the area in the mid-1760s.

The mystery of how the Bermudian church came to be built on the land of one man named Jacob when it was "offered and bestowed" by another one named Jacob remains. What is clear is that the church land was unpatented until November 5, 1840, when the Commonwealth granted a deed for 229 acres 102 perches, including the church property, to Alexander Power. He then owned the large farm which Jacob Comly had purchased and which remained in his family until 1833. There are instances in which an owner, having procured a patent deed which included a church property, then gave a deed to the church conveying patent rights to it. This is not known to have happened in this case.

As early as the late 1730s there were Quakers, or members of the Society of Friends, in northern Adams county. They developed two meetings, one called Huntington and the other Menallen, both named after the townships in which they were located. The first Huntington meetinghouse was built on land for which William Beales had secured a warrant for 50 acres on June 24, 1763.¹³ Then, on December 9, 1766, after securing a survey, he transferred 5 acres of it to four "members of and Trustees for the Society of the People called Quakers, in Huntington Township." Beals promised that, when he or his heirs "shall have ob-

tained a Patent from the Honourable Proprietaries . . . for the aforesaid Tract of Land . . . then he or they shall and will make do and execute a good and sufficient Deed of Conveyance” for the 5 acres to the trustees, “they paying a proportionable part of the . . . Expences in obtaining the said Patent.” This never happened, because on February 12, 1799, the Huntington trustees secured from the Commonwealth their own clear and full title for their 5 acres.¹⁴

Christ Church, Huntington

The experience of the Anglicans in the Bermudian settlement, as they went about the task of securing land for their congregation, only adds to the variety and confusion already demonstrated by previous examples drawn from colonial Adams county churches. Their experience has been chosen for the most extensive treatment in this essay.¹⁵

Situated in the western part of Huntington township, extending into Tyrone, and lying roughly between the present towns of Heidlersburg and York Springs, there is a moderately sloping, and no better than moderately fertile, area which attracted some of the earliest families choosing to locate in northern Adams county. On June 9, 1738, the proprietors issued three warrants for large tracts of land in this part of the Bermudian settlement: to William Wierman, a Quaker, for 500 acres “on a north west branch of Conewago creek called Curmegan where he now lives”; to Valentine Fickes, a German Reformed, for 200 acres “near Wm. Wyerman’s Land on a branch of Conewago”; and to William Proctor, an Anglican, for 300 acres “situate near Big Conewago.” During the next ten years, warrants for nearby land were issued to David Richey, John Cox, Henry Sigfred, William Field, John McGrew, David Kenworthy, James Murphy, Henry Harris, Richard Proctor, and others, not all of whom are known to have been Anglicans. In several cases, the land covered by these warrants was later purchased by such Anglicans as John Collins and Joseph Dodds.

Recognizing the qualifications of some of these people to fill posts in local and provincial government, both provincial authorities and county voters chose them for public office. For example, the name of Archibald McGrew was on a short list of persons recommended to the proprietors for service when York county was established in 1749. In 1754 he was elected coroner in 1761 he was appointed a justice of the peace and six years later he was elected to the provincial assembly. Among the per-

sons chosen to serve as grand jurors during the first several court sessions after 1749 were Richard and William Proctor; Isaac, John, and Richard Sadler; Francis and William Hodge; and John Collins. Members of Christ Church were among the earliest appointed township officers of Huntington and Tyrone townships. In the former, William Young was named constable in 1751 and David Richey in 1752. In the latter, William Proctor was appointed constable in 1752 and John Maxwell in 1754.

In the late summer of 1746, Reverend Richard Locke, an Anglican minister then residing in Lancaster, reported to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, which had recently appointed him Itinerant Missionary of Pennsylvania,¹⁶ that soon after he had arrived in Lancaster in 1744 someone came to him from a place he called "Contwager" to tell him how much the Anglicans living there "stood in want of a Clergyman," especially since the nearest available one lived one hundred miles away. The Anglicans there, he wrote, "had made a purchase of 180 Acres of Land for the maintainance of a Clergyman."

Locke responded by visiting the settlement. There were about 150 people at his first service, but he was careful to add that many of them were not Anglicans, but what he called Dissenters. He was told that there were "about 100 for some miles round that belong to the Church of England." Locke organized a congregation by installing the elected lay officers (wardens and vestrymen). With his encouragement, he reported, "they immediately fell to work to raise a log house church." On his third visit he administered communion to thirteen persons. The people, he believed, were very poor, since they could not raise even twenty shillings to pay his traveling expenses. It was a new country in which he found himself, since "10 years ago there was not a white man in all those parts." It was also a fast-growing country, since "there is little or no Land now to be taken up at the first Purchase."¹⁷

In October 1748, as Richard Locke was about to return to England for a visit, the inhabitants of the townships of Huntington and Tyrone petitioned the society for a minister "to reside amongst us." Having "purchased a Tract of Land of an hundred and eighty acres" for use as a glebe, they had "built a small church already, which we have called Christ Church, of thirty feet long and twenty wide."¹⁸ But for want of a regular minister they remained "in a starving condition for y^e spiritual nourishment of our Souls." What was perhaps even more distressing for them, and what "cuts us to the very harte (is) to see our poor Infants dye without being made members of Christ by Baptism."

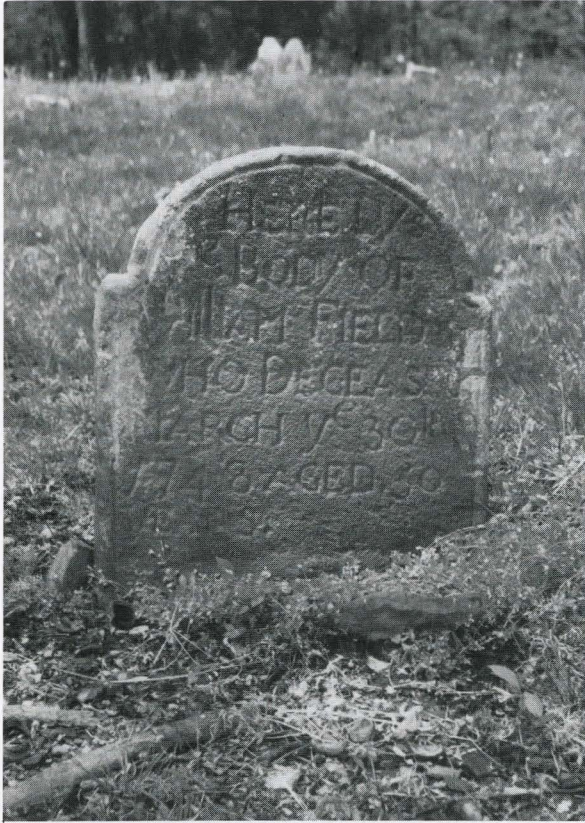


Fig. 1: The tombstone of William Field (d. 1748) was standing in the Christ Church graveyard as late as 1996. (Courtesy James P. Myers, Jr.)

Thirty-seven persons signed what followed, which was headed the “Subscription of the Congregation of Crist Church,” in Huntington, Tyrone, and adjacent parts. The signers promised more than thirty pounds in annual subscriptions and expressed the belief that the total amount given would increase when they had a minister in residence “who by his prudent conduct may recommend himself to those who at present are not so warm in y^e cause as we but yet well minded to itt.”¹⁹

The petitioners were probably realistic enough to know that an answer to their request would be some years in coming. In June 1752 Reverend George Craig, who had ar-

rived in America the year before and taken up residence as itinerant missionary in Lancaster, succeeding Locke, informed the society that he had recently administered communion at Christ Church to twenty-two persons. It was Craig whose missionary activity resulted in the creation of an Anglican parish of three congregations, which lasted for about half a century. On his way to Christ Church, he told the society, he had preached in York, where he found “but a few English Families, . . . its chief Inhabitants being German.” Going beyond Christ Church, he had preached and administered communion in Carlisle, “where they have no church and no Missionary ever was before.”²⁰

The first resident pastor of what is here being called the Huntington parish did not take up his duties until seven years after the petition of 1748. His name was Thomas Barton (1728-1780). Ordained in London

Fig. 2: MEMBERS "OF THE CONGREGATION OF CHRIST CHURCH" WHO PLEDGED TO CONTRIBUTE ANNUALLY TO THE SUPPORT OF A MINISTER WHO WOULD BE SENT TO THEM, 1748:

Richard Sadler*	Jacob Armfeele	Heneiry Hariss*
John Sadler*	John Simens Jur.	John Thomson
thomas Young	Jene feeld	James McGrew
Isaac Sadler*	Elishey Badsalt	Archabald McGrew*
John Maxwell*	Thomas Nash	Will Procter*
Thomas Morow*	William Young*	John Douglas
Samuel Pope	John Collans*	Charles Coulson*
John Coxen	Willaim Mils	John Adlum
Alaxander McGrew*	Mickal Wilson	John Griffeth
John Wilson*	John feeld	John Sponsly
[]	Frances hodg*	David Kenworthy
Richard Procter	James Reay	
Richard Scoot	John Simens Senr	

**The asterisk denotes those who in 1759 signed a similar petition, which lacked amounts pledged. The eleventh name on the 1748 list is not decipherable.*

early in 1755 and commissioned by the society for the Pennsylvania service, he arrived in Philadelphia in April. Members of Christ Church came to the city in wagons and brought his family and their effects to Huntington township. Barton was pleased to learn that his parishioners "had struggled hard to keep alive some sense of religion among their children by meeting every Sunday and getting one of the Members to read prayers to them." After he made his first round of pastoral visits, the wardens and vestrymen of the parish agreed that he should conduct services on three Sundays out of every six at Christ Church, two at Carlisle, and one at York. In addition, he agreed to visit Anglicans several times each year in such places as Shippensburg, Sherman's Valley, West Pennsborough, and Marsh Creek. In his first report to the society, which was not made until November 1756, he commented on the increasing numbers attending the services, many of whom were not Anglicans. At Christ Church, for example, there were sometimes so many present that he was "obliged to preach to them under the Covert of the Trees."²¹

Increasing numbers did not necessarily translate into an increasing financial support. "Upon my arrival at Huntington," Barton wrote in November 1756, "I found the Glebe still under its native woods and the people not able to make any improvement upon it." As a result, he had to purchase his own land and construct the buildings necessary for his family. Although the parishioners agreed to help pay his debts, thus far they had not been able to do so. He cautioned that this statement was

not meant “to derogate from the merit of my good parishioners,” since they “would willingly do anything in their power to afford me an easy support and maintenance.”²²

Barton believed that he had arrived in the Huntington parish at a time when within a few years it “would have vied with the ablest in this province, as it was in a flourishing state and could not contain less than 2000 persons members of the Church of England.” Also, he was hopeful of the eventual success of his efforts to persuade some of the Indian traders who regularly visited Carlisle “to exchange their savage barbarity for the pure and peaceable religion of Jesus.”²³

All of the optimism of his first months disappeared with the defeat in July 1755 of the British army under General Edward Braddock and its retreat to the safety of Philadelphia. This opened the entire Pennsylvania frontier from New Jersey westward to the Maryland line to merciless French and Indian attacks.

Barton immediately placed himself in the forefront of efforts to defend the Cumberland county frontier and then repel the attackers. Among other things, he and some of his parishioners helped construct fortifications. He and some of his fellow-pastors, including Presbyterians and German Reformed, joined together to urge people in York and Cumberland counties to defend their families and homes. In August 1756 he prepared a petition to the governor, reminding him that “the County of Cumberland is mostly evacuated, and Part of this become the Frontier,” and calling upon him to make every effort to relieve the situation. There were some 265 signatures on the two copies of this petition which have survived. Among names of Lutherans, Reformed, and Presbyterians were those of some of Barton’s parishioners in Christ Church, including five Sadlers, two Hattons, three McGrews, John Abbott, Joseph Dodds, Francis Hodge, John Maxwell, David Richey, and William Young.²⁴

When the French destroyed and evacuated Fort Duquesne and the English occupied the site in November 1758, war in Pennsylvania all but ended. In reflecting upon their activities during the preceding two and one-half years, Barton could believe that he and his parishioners had done their part in contributing to the victory.

In the spring of 1759 Barton had left the Huntington parish and moved with his family to Lancaster. He informed the society of his intention to visit his former congregations “and render them every service in my power” until another minister reached them. He also forwarded to London a petition, dated October 2, 1759, from “the members of the Episcopal Churches in the counties of York and Cumberland in Pennsylvania.”

The text praised their former minister for his many exertions on their behalf and asked for a successor. "We are now entirely sensible of the Superior advantages attending the regular ministration of God's word," the petitioners declared. In concluding, they stated their intention "immediately to make all suitable improvement on the Glebe, to erect a Parsonage House and a New Church; in short, to exert ourselves to the utmost of our power in so interesting and important a Matter."

Of the 61 signatures on the petition, more than half were those of members of Christ Church, including 14 who had signed the 1748 petition. Since this was a request from the Huntington parish, members of the congregations in York and Carlisle also signed. Three Anglican ministers - George Craig, Thomas Barton, and William Smith - added their endorsement of the petition. Smith was the provost of the College of Philadelphia.²⁵

The minister who arrived in the parish in 1760, William Thomson (sometimes spelled Thompson) (1735-1785), was not only the first native son in the pulpit, but also the son of Reverend Samuel Thompson, who served the Great Conewago Presbyterian church, near Hunterstown, from 1749 until 1779. Upon his ordination in England in 1759, the society commissioned him for the American service. He arrived in Pennsylvania in the spring of the following year.

It was William Thomson who opened the first known record book at Christ Church. He recorded baptisms (but only for the years 1760-1763) and began the keeping of brief vestry minutes. His faithful listing of the names of wardens and vestrymen, beginning in 1760, offers us the most complete record of lay leadership in any colonial Adams county church. The only Barton register which has survived contains marriages and some baptisms. He took it with him when he went to Lancaster and continued using it there.

During this pastorate Christ congregation built the new church which its members had promised in their 1759 petition; the actual decision to build was made early in 1763. They received some help from what might be considered an unexpected source. On February 15, 1765, the Pennsylvania assembly passed an act authorizing a lottery to raise the sum of some 3,000 pounds, to be used for the benefit of ten Anglican congregations in Pennsylvania. Of this sum, 515 pounds were allocated for building churches in Carlisle and York, as well as for repairing (this is the language of the act) Christ Church. Available records do not establish how much its members eventually realized, but apparently not all

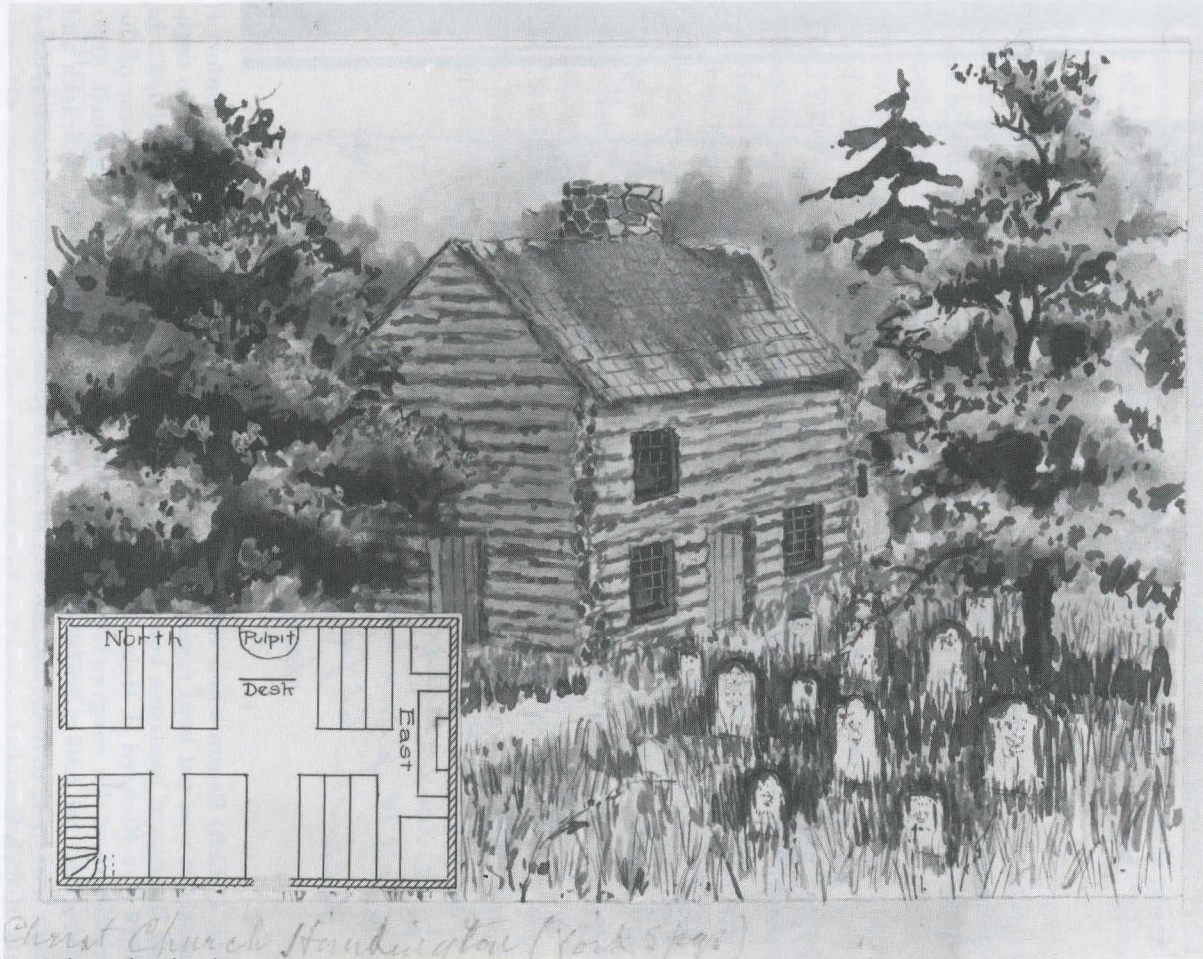


Fig. 3:
Sketch of
the second
log church,
Christ
Church
(on White
Church
Road,
Huntington
township),
drawn in the
1860s by the
Rev. Francis
Clerc.

(Courtesy of
St. John's
Episcopal
Church and
Dickinson
College,
both in
Carlisle, Pa.)

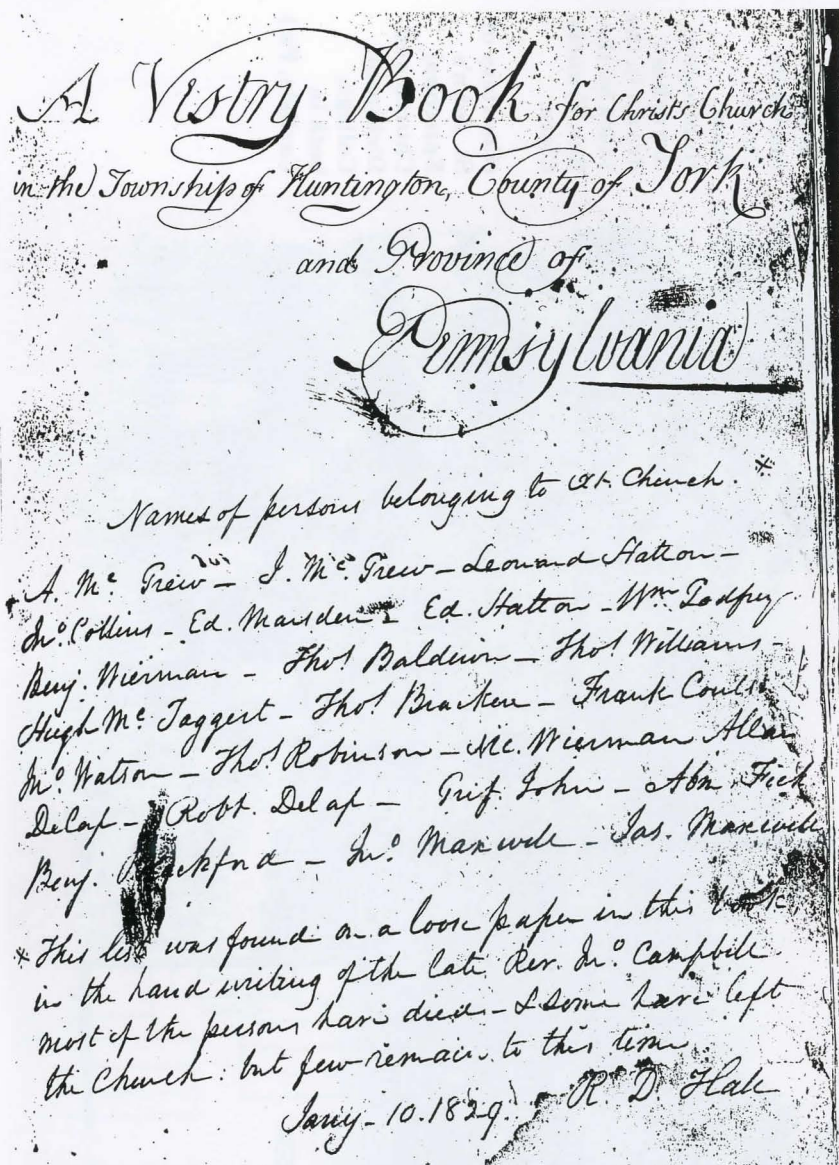


Fig. 4: (Left) Begun when William Thomson became minister in 1760. Unfortunately, it was not kept regularly thereafter. For example, there were no regular listings of baptisms between 1763 and 1784 or between 1798 and 1823. In 1829 Rev. Richard D. Hale entered on the title page the names of some of the members of the congregation during the pastorate of John Campbell. After being lost for half a century, in 1939 the book was located in Nebraska and acquired by the Historical Society of York County. (Courtesy Historical Society of York County.)

of the lottery tickets were sold. In 1767 the vestry appointed two of its members to travel to Philadelphia in order to claim their share.

Although in its 1759 petition the congregation promised to improve the glebe land and build a parsonage, William Thomson soon found that the glebe land yielded little or no income and that the house was so unsatisfactory that he decided to live elsewhere. On February 22, 1763, he secured a warrant for 300 acres of land located several tracts northwest of the church, along the Carlisle road, and previously improved by a member of the parish, Thomas Morrow.

Only a few months after this warrant was obtained, warfare again erupted along the long frontier. Writing to the society from Carlisle on October 2, 1763, Thomson declared that "the distressing circumstances of this Mission I can't possibly describe. Everything here is in the greatest confusion and utmost disorder." It took a full year before the governor could declare that peace with the Indians had once more been established and that hostilities should cease.²⁶

In 1769 William Thomson resigned the Huntington parish and moved to New Jersey. His successor, John Andrews (1746-1813), was a native of Maryland and a 1765 graduate of the College of Philadelphia. After studying theology with Thomas Barton in Lancaster, he went to England, where in February 1767 he was ordained and the society commissioned him as a missionary to America. His first parish was at Lewes, Delaware. Early in 1770 he came to the Huntington parish and may have moved into the house on the glebe. His pastorate there was short; he left in 1772 to take a congregation in Queen Anne county, Maryland. According to his biographer, he needed a greater income than the Huntington parish could provide for him.²⁷

* * *

After a short vacancy, a new pastor, Daniel Batwell (d. 1802), arrived in the Huntington parish in April 1774. He had chosen to leave an apparently successful eight-year pastorate of a London church to accept

the society's appointment as a missionary to America. Upon reviewing the geographical extent of his new parish, he decided that since Christ Church, with its glebe, was roughly half way between his other two congregations, it was his "Duty," as he described it, to live there. What he found on the glebe, he told the society, was "a wretched Log-house not habitable," but one which, with some of his own funds, used to construct outbuildings, plant fruit trees, and establish a garden, could be turned into "a comfortable Habitation." Writing a year later, on March 29, 1775, he said that the house "is nearly repaired, and I shall be able to carry my family thither soon after Easter."²⁸

Within two months of his arrival in the parish, Batwell began asking questions about the Huntington church land and receiving disturbing answers. The glebe land, he reported to the society on May 20, 1774, "(said to consist of near 200 Acres) is neither patented, nor warranted, so that as yet there is no legal Title to it." He vowed to use his "best Endeavours with the Congregation to have this defect Supplied," and asked the society for instructions on how to proceed "in this weighty matter." In responding a year later (May 6, 1775), the secretary told him that the society could give him no instructions and advised him to follow the existing rules. Even before receiving this letter, Batwell had to express to the society (June 26, 1775) his "Sorrow, that the present unsettled State of Affairs prevents me from completing the Matter of the Glebe."

If Thomas Barton was faced with a severe crisis within months after his arrival in the Huntington parish in 1755, Daniel Batwell was faced with one which proved to be even more severe soon after he became pastor nineteen years later. Seeking a clear title to the Christ Church glebe lands had to be pushed aside by much more pressing and immediate concerns.

As long as Americans were protesting what many believed were unwise and unacceptable regulations which the British government was imposing upon them, at the very time when they were increasingly convinced they were able to handle their own affairs, Daniel Batwell could join most other Anglican clergymen in calling for the redress of American grievances. But when, early in 1776, the calls for independence became louder and louder, these clergymen had to reexamine their positions. King George III was the head of the Church of England. Its ministers were committed by their ordination vows to pray for the entire royal family during each worship service. Theirs was a liturgical church; these prayers were part of the liturgy which was to be used in every

such service. In addition, most Anglican ministers in Pennsylvania were commissioned and supported by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, a distinctly English organization.

As the sentiment for independence increased, Batwell began expressing his opposition to it. Then, along with most other Anglican ministers outside Philadelphia, in the spring of 1776 he ceased holding public services in the parish. Continuing to live on the glebe, he tried to serve his parishioners in other ways, such as baptizing children and serving occasionally as witness to a will. He soon became known as a pronounced Loyalist or Tory, a position which in York and Cumberland counties attracted to him both supporters and detractors.

On November 25, 1776, Samuel Johnston, the chief proprietary agent in York and the leading Anglican layman there, wrote to the society that, although being advised for his own safety not to come to York, Batwell had entered the town two months before "to supply his family with some necessaries." As he was leaving, persons Johnston identified as "all Germans" accused Batwell of having stolen the horse he was riding and then, taking him to the Codorus creek, "with savage cruelty they soused him in the water several times." He was allowed to return home, wet clothes and all.²⁹

A year later, in September 1777, as the British were about to seize Philadelphia, a York county justice of the peace who was also a state commissioner to seize the personal effects of Tories, ordered Batwell taken into custody and placed in the York county prison, on the charge of conspiring with others "to destroy the publick Stores and Magazines" at Lancaster, York, and Carlisle. He was ordered held until either the Continental Congress or the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania "shall take further order touching the said Daniel."³⁰

In Batwell's own words, "in the Night between the 23d and 24th of September I was seized in my Bed in a dangerous sickness, and being unable to stand or help myself, was put with my Bed into a waggon, and conveyed to York Prison, where I have since lain in a most languishing Condition." The prisoner lost no time in seeking his release. In a letter to the Continental Congress dated October 1, he solemnly protested his "absolute Innocence of the Crimes laid to my Charge" and asked the Congress to "enquire into the matter." In an accompanying letter, Dr. David Jameson certified that the prisoner was "so much emaciated by a complication of disorders... that he must sink under it" unless he is promptly released.³¹

Aware that there was a serious question of who had jurisdiction in a case such as this, the Congress limited itself to directing the jailer to remove Batwell to some properly guarded place where his life would no longer be in danger. When he appealed to them again on November 7, 1777, Congress did no more than recommend to the Commonwealth that Batwell might be released if he took the required oath of allegiance to Pennsylvania (which required one to "renounce and refuse all allegiance to George the Third, King of Great Britain, his heirs and successors") or, if he refused the oath, that he might be permitted, with his family, to cross into British lines.

Offered the option, Batwell chose the latter course and arrived in Philadelphia on February 27, 1778. When the British evacuated the city four months later, he went with them to New York. For a time he held a commission as chaplain to some Loyalist New Jersey soldiers, but his poor health probably made it impossible for him to serve in that capacity. He died in England in 1802.³²

To a lesser extent, the crisis facing Daniel Batwell during the American Revolution also confronted all Anglican laymen in the Huntington parish. In prosecuting the revolution to a successful conclusion, the Pennsylvania government required of its people heavier and heavier taxes, acceptance of increasingly worthless paper money, militia service, and the same oath of allegiance which Batwell could not bring himself to take. Although the primary sources for studying the degree of popular support for the revolution in York and Adams counties are regrettably very incomplete, the number of known active Loyalists or Tories who were charged with violating the laws, arrested, tried, and convicted was small. Not many suffered a fate similar to that of Daniel Batwell.³³

* * *

As the Revolution ended, it was probably not certain that the colonial Anglican church, at least in Pennsylvania, would survive in a recognizable form in an independent United States of America. For that to occur, it would surely have to be reorganized as an independent American church, with power to order its own affairs, including the ordination of its clergy. Only after the British parliament passed an act in 1785 permitting bishops to consecrate other bishops without requiring of them an oath of loyalty to the monarch, and only after three Americans were so consecrated (one in Scotland and two in England) was it possible to organize the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States in 1789.

Five years before this happened, a man who identified himself as Reverend John Campbell (1752-1819) appeared in the Huntington parish, to which as it turned out he was no stranger. Born near Shippensburg in Cumberland county, he was the son of Francis Campbell, a merchant, tavernkeeper, justice of the peace, and active Presbyterian layman. John attended Princeton College (then the College of New Jersey), which graduated him in 1770. Instead of then seeking entrance into the Presbyterian ministry, as one might have expected, he went to England and was ordained an Anglican priest in 1773, when he was but 21 years of age. For the next decade, and until after the Revolution ended with British recognition of American independence, he remained in England, serving as pastor of at least two parishes.

By 1784 he had returned to Pennsylvania. On June 28 of that year two vestrymen of St. John's Church in York informed him "that we are in want of a clergyman, and from the character we have received of you as well as the small acquaintance we had, [we can] assure you that no one will be more agreeable." After promising to "endeavor to make you happy" and reminding him of "the smallness of our number," they made him a generous salary offer, which he accepted. Within a matter of weeks he was elected and embarked on a new career, as a Protestant Episcopal minister.³⁴

Christ congregation elected John Campbell its pastor on August 9, 1784. Of the seventeen wardens and vestrymen chosen on that day, eleven were men who had served before 1776 (including Archibald McGrew, Leonard Hatton, John Collins, John and James Maxwell, and William Godfrey), while the others were newcomers. One of Campbell's first acts was to agree that a sum of money due him should be applied to building a new barn on the glebe. Another was to resume recording baptisms, the first in almost twenty-one years. Still another was to join with the vestry in an effort to secure a clear title for the glebe land.

In spite of repeated statements made as early as the 1740s that the church had purchased and owned a tract of 180 or 200 acres of land, as late as 1784 the land records of Pennsylvania contained no evidence whatsoever that such a purchase had ever actually occurred. Accordingly, on May 13, 1785, the Commonwealth granted to William Godfrey and John Collins, "Church Wardens for the time being" a warrant for 180 acres of land in Huntington township, York county, "In Trust to them and their Successors for ever, to the use of the Minister officient or his Successor or Successors in the English Episcopal church." The warrant stated that the land included an improvement already made. Interest

was to be calculated from March 1, 1755, which was the land office's estimate of when the land was first being used.

The deputy surveyor to whom this warrant was presented for execution was a man new to the job. John Forsyth had been commissioned on May 7, 1784, to work in ten townships, of which Huntington was one. On June 17, 1785, he did survey 172 acres 42 perches which the church claimed, but he had to report that about 54 of those acres were already included in a patent which had only recently been issued to Thomas Armor.

Although Thomas Armor, a long-time resident of York, never held the title of deputy surveyor, from the time of his first appearance in York county in the 1750s he had been authorized to survey many tracts in widely different parts of the county and make returns to the land office. Anyone working with these surveys, which he often did not sign, can recognize his distinctive handwriting. Between 1752 and 1784 he had acquired fifteen warrants in his own name. The proprietors commissioned him a justice of the peace for York county in 1755. Twenty years later, he became and remained an active supporter of the Revolution. As an Anglican, he must have been familiar with the Christ Church glebe, but this did not prevent him from claiming what many of its members believed had always been part of it.

On June 19, 1769, a man named Joseph Wallace, or Wallis, secured West Side Application 5523 (a land paper which we can consider the equivalent of a warrant) for 150 acres, joining land granted to Henry Sigfred and William Wierman in Huntington township. Less than four months later, Wallace transferred his rights to this application to Thomas Armor. Apparently no survey was made until March 27, 1777, at a time when the land office was closed and before the revolutionary government reopened it in 1784. On September 2, 1784, the Commonwealth granted Armor a patent deed for 141 acres of land. Armor died in York early in 1785 (Rev. John Campbell conducted his funeral), leaving his estate to two persons he described in his will as cousins: Robert Bigham of Cumberland township, who was named executor, and Thomas Bigham of Hamiltonban township.

Convinced that more than fifty acres of a glebe which they had claimed for forty years or more had been snatched from them, the Christ Church wardens now made an effort to reclaim them. There is no evidence that they appealed to the board of property, one of whose duties was to resolve similar disputes. Instead, Campbell, Godfrey, and Collins, "in behalf of the . . . Episcopal Congregation at Huntington," entered an action

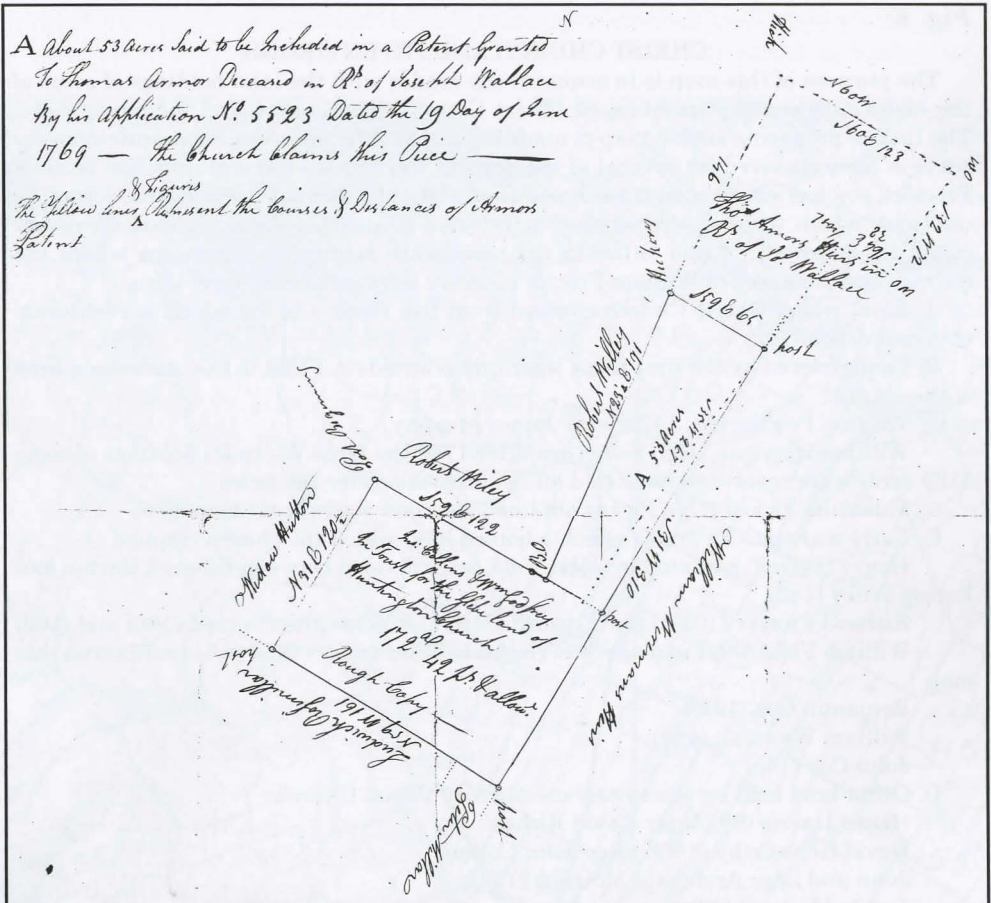


Fig. 5: The survey which John Forsyth made in 1785 illustrates clearly how the patent which Thomas Armor obtained the year before encroached upon the land which the members of Christ Church had long claimed as their own. Eventually, the congregation purchased about 60 acres from the Armor patent.

in the July 1785 term of the York county court of common pleas against "Robert Bigham as well in his own right and also as Executor of the last Will and Testament of Thomas Armor deceased." The court ordered that any two of three named justices of the peace - Henry Slagle, Samuel Edie, and Jacob Rudisill - meeting at the tavern of Paul Metzger in Hanover on September 7, 1785, take the depositions of fifteen designated men, all of whom were well acquainted with the history of the church and its glebe. The depositions were then to be filed and become a part of the permanent public record (*Perpetuam rei Memoriam*).³⁵

Fig. 6:

CHRIST CHURCH AND ITS ENVIRONS

The purpose of this map is to acquaint the reader with the land holdings of some of the eighteenth-century members of Christ Church, Huntington, and their neighbors. The task of preparing such a map is made especially difficult because no contemporary surveys have survived for several of the earliest warrantees (for example, for William Proctor), some of whom soon transferred their rights by means of documents, formal or informal, which were never recorded or referred to in later deeds. It took surveyors commissioned by the Land Office in the nineteenth century to determine where the courses and distances of William Proctor's survey were, or should have been.

A. Land which Christ Church claimed from the 1740s and for which it eventually obtained deeds (102)

B. Land covered by the first three warrants granted (in 1738) in the immediate area of the church:

William Proctor (97, 147), later James Murphy

William Wierman (105) Sometime after 1766 the large Wierman holdings of some 1139 acres were resurveyed and laid off in subdivisions for the heirs

Valentine Fickes (156) Fickes obtained a second warrant (155) in 1746

C. Early warrants for tracts which adjoined land which the church claimed

Henry Sigfred, patented by John Todd, later divided between Edward Hatton and Robert Wiley (142)

Richard Proctor (101), later Edward Hatton. Proctor also claimed (100) and (160)

William Field (99) Field also had claims to other nearby land not identified on this map

Benjamin Cox (143)

William Wierman (144)

John Cox (145)

D. Other land held by some early members of Christ Church

Henry Harris (98), later David Richey

David Kenworthy (146), later John Collins

John and later Archibald McGrew (130)

James Maxwell (67)

James Ray (11)

Isaac Sadler (82)

Richard Sadler (96, 126)

Jasper Wilson (79)

John Wilson (78)

William Young (80), later Leonard Hatton

E. Two early ministers of the Huntington parish had their own land: Thomas Barton in Reading township and William Thomson in Huntington. Charles Coulson and William Godfrey lived in Monaghan township, in the present York county. Both were buried in the Christ Church graveyard. Joseph Dodds, one of the deponents in 1785, who may not have been a member of the church, owned (97, 160), part of which had been held by Richard Proctor and part by James Murphy. Andrew Thompson, who was a justice of the peace in Huntington and Reading townships from 1777 until his death in 1811, owned (209).

Map by Arthur Weaner.



All three justices elected to participate in the proceedings on the appointed day. They took testimony from nine men, not all of whom were members of the congregation, but most of whom had lived in the settlement from its earliest days.³⁶ The memories of John Collins, Joseph Dodds, Archibald McGrew, David Richey, Henry Wierman, and Nicholas Wierman each went back to or more than forty years. David Richey testified that he had come to Bermudian "three years before the hard winter," which from other evidence may have occurred in 1740 or 1741.³⁷ Robert Wiley deposed that he had resided in the settlement for some 23 years, a statement which a recorded deed enables us to confirm. He bought his property in 1761. Peter Snyder's memory went back only about 17 years. He was able to testify that Rev. Daniel Batwell had engaged him to split rails and cut timber, which he did on land which Henry Wierman assured him at the time was part of the glebe, but which was now in dispute.

With the exception of Forsyth, all of these men could testify from long experience that they well knew the lands in question as the church or glebe lands, as well as the identity of all of the adjoining owners. When it came time for Nicholas Wierman to testify, he could even identify the first claimants to all of the adjoining lands. Several went out of their way to make clear the English Episcopal church of colonial days was now the Protestant Episcopal church.

David Richey testified that it was "William Proctor, William Fields, Richard Proctor, and others, the first Settlers and Improvers," who had "allotted a Tract of Land" which was now the church and glebe land, and that "the Land allotted was to be two hundred acres." He did not say that they had laid any formal or legal claim to it by purchasing a warrant. By "allotted," he certainly meant that they had laid their own informal claim to a large and vacant tract on which they intended to plant a church.

Richey also claimed that "twenty-seven years ago or upwards he assisted to build a Church upon the said Land." The emphasis here must be placed on the "or upwards," because the evidence establishes clearly that the first church dated from the 1740s. Archibald McGrew testified that "a Church was built on the . . . Lands when this Deponent first knew the said Lands, which is upwards of forty years." John Collins said that "a Church was standing upon the Lands . . . when he first knew it" and that "he has been acquainted with the Church and Glebe Land . . . for upwards of thirty-eight years last past." The Collins testimony corresponded closely with that of Rev. Richard Locke in establishing when the first church was built.

Several of the deponents also testified that the edifice standing in 1785 was the second on the glebe. David Richey stated that "the first Church decayed;" consequently, "upwards of twenty years ago" it was taken down and he then helped to build the one then standing on the property.

Not limited to the church of 1785, the testimony included the other buildings which the congregation had erected. Joseph Dodds remembered helping to construct "a parsonage house." True to form, he could not "tell how long since, but knows it to be many years." John Collins and Nicholas Wierman remembered more precisely. The former stated that the parsonage dated from "upwards of twenty-five years ago." The latter said that it "was built upwards of twenty years ago." Collins remembered that when the first church was taken down the logs were "applied to build a Barn on the said Lands." This was a credible statement, since using timbers removed from one structure to build another was long a common practice.

One of the particulars which it was most important for the deponents to establish, beyond any doubt, was the extent to which the congregation had actually made use of, or "improved," more of the land it claimed than what was needed for church, parsonage, and barn. Had it made use of the land which Armor had patented? One after another of the deponents stated that about 20 years previously, in the early 1760s, the task of clearing fields north of the church had begun. John Collins "well remembers," he said, "that Two Fields were Cleared on the North East end of the Tract," one more than 21 years ago and the other 17 or 18. If the Bigham claim were to be upheld, he believed, it would take away about 53 acres of fields and woodlands, all of "which were held and known to belong to the said Church" during his entire 38 years in the settlement. This was in addition to some 60 acres of meadow and what he called cleared upland which was located on undisputed land.

Almost every deponent stressed that the congregation enjoyed what Archibald McGrew called "full, quiet, and peaceable" possession of all 180 or 200 acres of the property it claimed until the summer of 1784 when, again according to Joseph Dodds, "a certain Robert Bigham warned the Carpenter at work at the . . . Barn, and claimed the Land in Right of Thomas Armor."

The testimony of John Forsyth bore directly on his experience with Thomas Armor and the land at issue in the year before he died. In July 1784, Forsyth said, Armor came to his residence in York and presented him with a survey for 140 acres 80 perches of land in Huntington town-

ship. The transcript of his detailed testimony leaves no doubt that what Armor showed him was a copy of the survey made in 1779. Armor then asked him to certify it - in effect, to make it official - since he was soon going to Philadelphia to obtain a patent deed for it. Forsyth replied that, since he was new to the district, he would consider the request, but expressed the hope that Armor "would not lead me into Error." The latter replied, as Forsyth remembered it, that "there was no dispute."

Later, when the two again met in York, Forsyth said that he would not certify the survey unless he was "on the Ground" to verify it, to which Armor replied that Forsyth must not go to the land, unless he went with him. "This was all the Conversation we ever had," Forsyth testified, "about the mentioned premises." Subsequently he learned that Armor had obtained the patent he desired.

A most rewarding piece of evidence which Forsyth offered in his testimony was the statement that, when he was surveying the church land in June 1785, the several neighbors who, probably at this request, accompanied him told him where they believed the lines and points should be. In following their directions, Forsyth found what to him were unmistakable marks of a survey of the church land which someone had made some twenty or thirty years before. Clearly, any such survey never got beyond the field notes of the surveyor who made it. There is no evidence that the wardens of Christ Church ever had a copy or that the surveyor ever sent a copy to the land office. There is some other evidence that such a survey had been made. When Deputy Surveyor George Stevenson was running the lines of a 96 acre tract for William Wierman on October 30, 1754, he identified its long course adjoining the Christ Church claim as "Land formerly Survey'd for a Church."³⁸

* * *

The first person to give his deposition in 1785 was Archibald McGrew. Although the available transcript does not specifically relate his testimony to that of John Forsyth, the other deponents were certainly intelligent and knowledgeable enough to recognize that the two men were discussing the same thing: an early survey of the church land made without a warrant and one not resulting in a patent deed. McGrew related that, after he was elected to one of his several terms as warden of Christ congregation, one of his predecessors gave him a receipt dated May 1, 1774, and containing instructions that it was to be delivered to Richard Peters, who was then an Anglican minister in Philadelphia, but who

from 1737 to 1760 had been secretary of the provincial land office.³⁹

McGrew did as he was advised to do. He went to Philadelphia and showed the document to Peters who, after reading it, decided that he could not determine whether it had been “applied . . . to take out a warrant for the . . . Glebe Lands or not.” Peters then sent McGrew to the land office. Had it ever issued a warrant for the church land? Finding none, on Peters’s advice he next went to see George Stevenson, whose district as deputy surveyor from 1749 to 1764 included Huntington township. Peters believed that Stevenson probably still had in his possession the field books used by George Smith, who from time to time in the 1740s had made surveys in the area, although he never held an appointment as deputy surveyor. If McGrew could secure a copy of the Smith survey of the church land, Peters assured him that he would “take out a Warrant and get the said Survey accepted.” The next step would be to obtain the prize: a patent deed.

Stevenson was then living in Carlisle. He found the survey among Smith’s field notes then in his possession and promised to make the requested copy. McGrew testified that “he repeatedly called for it, but could never get it and Mr. Peters afterwards died.” The death of Richard Peters occurred on July 10, 1776, only six days after the Declaration of Independence was publicly announced and as the provincial land office was about to close.⁴⁰

The first known references to the Christ Church land are contained in two early surveys. The first of these was one of 403 acres made by Deputy Surveyor Thomas Cookson for Henry Sigfred on October 19, 1742. The land adjoining the long eastern line of this large survey was described as the “Ch: Tract.” Robert Wiley, who owned much of this property from 1761 until his death in 1811, was one of the nine persons to make a deposition in 1785. The second early reference was in a survey of 106 acres, 120 perches which Cookson made for William Field on October 27, 1743. The land adjoining the long northern line of this survey was described as “Church Land.” These two surveys establish clearly that the ground which David Richey described as having been “allotted” for the church had already been selected by October 19, 1742. In his testimony Richey identified William Field as one of the “first Settlers and Improvers” who made the choice. Field died on March 30, 1748, aged 50 years, and was one of the first persons, if not the first, to be buried in the Christ Church graveyard.⁴¹

The depositions which Forsyth and McGrew gave in 1785 were part of what was called a bill to perpetuate testimony, not of a suit intended in

and of itself to recover property. Not until seven years later, in 1792, at a time when the Thomas Armor estate was still unsettled and in debt, did the vestry authorize Rev. John Campbell to act on their behalf to reclaim what they were certain had long been their own. Campbell was successful, but two steps were required to complete the task. Acting on court order, on September 6, 1792, the sheriff sold two properties from the Armor estate, one of which consisted of sixty acres in Huntington township, taken from the Armor patent of 1784. The purchasers were Samuel Riddle and William Nelson, to whom the sheriff gave a deed on October 15, 1792. There is no known evidence to establish whether they purchased the 60 acres on behalf of the church, but on February 27, 1793, for the nominal sum of 4 pounds 10 shillings, they transferred the property to William Godfrey and John Collins, "the present Wardens of Christ Church Congregation . . . in Trust for the Use of the said Congregation forever."⁴²

One more important step still remained. Some of the land included in John Forsyth's 1785 survey still remained without a full and clear title. On January 29, 1813, in payment of the remaining charges, which amounted to \$93.42, the Commonwealth granted a patent deed to Godfrey and Collins for 118 acres 102 perches.⁴³

* * *

The successful conclusion to the long and tortuous effort to secure possession of and a clear title to Christ Church's land came after the Huntington parish had come to an end. Rev. John Campbell, who chose to live in York rather than on the glebe, left Christ Church about 1798 and the York congregation several years later. He moved to Carlisle, where he died in 1819. While in York, he was one of the chief founders of the York County Academy, which many years later developed into the present York College. Between 1796 and 1819, he was an active trustee of Dickinson College.⁴⁴

After Campbell's departure, the Christ Church pulpit was often vacant. The congregation which was once the strongest one in the Huntington parish was now struggling to survive. In 1836 its members built a church, which they called a chapel, in York Springs, apparently intending to worship at both places. Five years later, on May 7, 1841, the legislature authorized the church wardens to sell all or part of the real estate, excepting only the burial ground in the country. The move into town did not attract the new support needed to thrive, even to survive.



THE GRAVEYARD

Fig. 7: The picture above was taken about the 1960s. *Fig. 8:* The one below (taken by Albert L. Rose and used with his permission) was taken about 1995.



By 1880 one could count the communicants on the fingers of one hand. In 1883 the wardens transferred their properties in both country and town to the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. The church in the country is long since gone. The chapel in York Springs is still standing.⁴⁵

When staff members of the Historical Society of York County visited the old graveyard in 1934, they found sixty gravestones with dates and more than one hundred fieldstones without inscriptions. There were stones for members of the Collins, Godfrey, Field, Hatton, Coulson, Sadler, and Bracken families. At the time of this writing, little remains.

* * *

The experiences of the six congregations discussed in this paper, each differing in some respects from the other, mirror those of thousands who in the eighteenth century made the first legal claim to parcels of land in Adams county which they wanted to claim as their own. While a few persons went through the required steps from warrant to survey to patent deed in a decade or even less, in most cases it took a much longer time. Many patents were issued to perhaps the third or fourth owner, and then only after the Commonwealth had made one of its periodic efforts to press them to pay the remaining charges and collect their deed.

It is evident that few, if any, of the first claimants had the experience of Christ church, Huntington, described here, or left such a full record of it.

* * *

Appendix

LAND HISTORY OF CHURCHES FOUNDED BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

CONEWAGO CHAPEL. Roman Catholic. Conewago twp. Congregation dates from about 1735-1740. Warrant 1743. Survey 1744. Patent 1837.

GREAT CONEWAGO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Straban twp., near Hunterstown. Congregation dates from 1740. Warrant 1785. Survey 1787. Patent 1790.

UPPER MARSH CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Cumberland twp. Congregation dates from 1740. Warrant 1765. Survey 1766. Penn agent deeds 1811 and 1829. Congregation moved into Gettysburg about 1814 and is now the Gettysburg Presbyterian Church.

CHRIST CHURCH. Anglican, later Episcopal. Huntington twp. Congregation dates from about 1745. Early unwarranted survey never returned to the land office. Warrant 1785. Survey 1785. Patent 1813. Congregation built a chapel in York Springs 1836. Congregation died out about 1880. Property transferred to the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania 1883.

LOWER BERMUDIAN LUTHERAN AND REFORMED CHURCH. Huntington, later Latimore, twp. Congregations date from 1745. First known deed for church property 1793. Property included in an 1840 patent. Reformed withdrew from the union and built their own church across the road 1871.

CHRIST REFORMED CHURCH. Germany, now Union twp., near Littlestown. Congregation dates from about 1745. Warrant 1750. Survey 1759. Patent 1774.

HUNTINGTON FRIENDS MEETING. Huntington, now Latimore, twp. Meeting dated from the 1740s. Land purchased from a member 1766. Patent 1799.

MENALLEN FRIENDS MEETING. Menallen twp. Meeting dates from the 1740s. Warrant 1788. Survey 1789. Patent 1813. Meeting moved to its present location north of Biglerville 1838.

LOWER MARSH CREEK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Hamiltonban twp. Congregation dates from 1748. Warrant 1767. Survey 1767. Penn agent deed 1808. Congregation moved to its present location, in Highland twp., and built the present church in 1790.

ROUND HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Reading twp. Congregation dated from about 1748. Disbanded and members joined the Great Conewago church in 1778. Warrant for the graveyard 1786. Survey 1786. No patent deed.

ROCK CREEK REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Cumberland twp. Congregation dated from 1753. Built on land of a member. Congrega-

tion secured no warrant, survey, or patent. Moved into Gettysburg about 1804 and built the first church in that town. Congregation disbanded about 1890.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH. Germany twp., now Littlestown. Congregation dates from 1763. Land purchased from Jacob Stehley in 1771; it had been patented by Jacob Schauman in 1762.

HILL ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Hamiltonban twp. Congregation dated from the 1760s. Warrant 1765. Survey 1765. Patent 1792. Congregation died out. Property escheated to the state and sold 1911. Then located in Liberty and Freedom twps.

PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. Straban twp. Congregation dated from the 1760s. Warrant 1773. Survey 1774. Never patented. Property sold to a Lutheran and a Reformed congregation about 1800. The Reformed withdrew in 1862 and built St. John's Church in New Chester. The Lutherans, now St. Paul's (Pines), remain at the old site.

CONEWAGO DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH. This congregation, which dated from the 1760s, built its first church in Straban twp., at the site of the present Low Dutch graveyard. Later it built near the junction of Coleman road and Route 30, also in Straban twp. The congregation having died out, an 1817 act passed by the legislature authorized the sale of its one acre of land and buildings.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH. Abbottstown. Congregation dates from about 1768. In 1770 John Abbott deeded it a lot which was part of a tract for which he had secured a patent in 1762 and on which he laid out the first town in the present Adams county in 1763.

EMMANUEL REFORMED CHURCH. Abbottstown. Congregation dates from about 1770-1. In 1771 John Abbott deeded it a lot which was part of a tract for which he had secured a patent in 1762 and on which he laid out the first town in the present Adams county in 1763.

* * *

(The list above does not include the Big Conewago Congregation of the Brethren, which may well date from the 1740s in both York and Adams counties, but which had no meetinghouses in Adams county until about 1852. There were Menonites living in southeastern Adams county well before the Revolution, but they had no meetinghouse until many years later. There is no credible evidence for the existence of a Methodist church in the present Adams county before the Revolution.)

Notes

1. Although the territory now within Adams county was part of York until Jan. 22, 1800, the present location of places mentioned in this paper is used.

2. For more information on Digges' Choice, see Jan A. Bankert, *Digges' Choice, 1724-1800: A History of Land Transactions within a Portion of York and Adams Counties, Pennsylvania* (Camden, Maine, 1996) (hereafter cited as Bankert).

3. The key to locating Pennsylvania warrants, surveys, and patents is available in the warrant registers. Many years ago it was decided to organize this vast bulk of documents around the warrants, which were the first step in obtaining a clear and full title. Volume 1 of the registers covers Adams and York counties. Volume 16 covers Lancaster county. These registers are available on microfilm at the Pennsylvania State Archives and also at the Adams County Historical Society (hereafter cited as ACHS).

Readers wishing more information about the many land transactions discussed in this paper should first consult the appropriate entry in a warrant register. For example, locating the name of Henry Neale and the date of Mar. 23, 1742, in the Lancaster county register (there was no York county until 1749) will also yield the date of return of the resulting survey (Mar. 22, 1837), its number in the copied survey records (C-170, p. 63), the name of the patentee (William McSherry), and the page of the book in which the patent was recorded (H-38, p. 232). Copies of most of the surveys referred to in this paper are in the ACHS.

Until the calendar change of 1752, the new year began on Mar. 25, not Jan. 1. Thus, a warrant issued on Mar. 23, 1742 (Old Style), is more accurately rendered as Mar. 23, 1743 (New Style). New Style dating is used in this paper.

4. Stoever's pastoral activity in the Conewago settlement is described in an

appendix by Frederick S. Weiser in Bankert, pp. 115-21.

5. The original minutes of the Donegal Presbytery, which began in 1732, are in the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia. There is a microfilm copy in the ACHS.

6. For a discussion of the complicated history of the manor, see Charles H. Glatfelter and Arthur Weaner, *The Manor of Maske: Its History and Individual Properties* (Gettysburg, 1992).

7. The 1811 Penn agent deed was recorded in Adams County Deed Book E, p. 221; the 1829 Penn agent deed is referred to in Deed Book 350, p. 849 (the original 1829 deed is not known to exist anymore); and the 1980 deed to the Gettysburg Presbyterian church is in Deed Book 350, p. 714.

8. Because Maryland authorities were granting both large and small tracts west of the river, as early as the 1720s the Penn proprietors decided they had to take steps to strengthen their own claim to the area. The most effective way to do this was to permit settlers to locate there with some form of Penn blessing. Beginning in 1734 Samuel Blunston was authorized to grant what were called licenses to settlers, with the promise that actual warrants and subsequent surveys would be available to them once there was a treaty with the Indians.

9. Since families living west of the river in York and Cumberland counties looked south rather than east for places in which to market their surplus products, the York county court ordained several increasingly important roads leading in the direction of the rapidly developing port of Baltimore. One of these, widely known as the Carlisle road and dating from the 1750s, began at the York-Cumberland county line and extended southward through the Bermudian settlement, and eventually through New Oxford and Hanover to the Maryland line.

10. There was no reason to use the name Lower Bermudian to refer to this church

until a second union church closer to the source of that stream was founded in 1782.

11. Adapted from the translation by the late Edna Albert in her translation of the church register from 1745 to 1864 (ACHS).

12. See York County Deed Book B, p. 185; B, p. 235; and 2-I, p. 399. Given the number of tombstones in the present graveyard for persons who died before 1793, and the lack of any tradition to the contrary, it is most unlikely that the present church and graveyard are on any spot other than the one on which the 1754 church was built.

13. The spelling of the family name used here is the one which appears on the warrant itself, which is but one of many ways in which it has been spelled. In fact, later in the same warrant it is spelled *Beals*.

14. See York County Deed Book 2-K, p. 252 for the 1766 deed. There is no record that anyone ever obtained a patent deed for the remainder of this survey.

15. Members of the Church of England were often called *Anglicans* during the colonial period, but it is evident from many of the sources used here that the name of the church adopted after the Revolution (Episcopal or Protestant Episcopal) was also used before. For example, the 1759 petition referred to later came from "Members of the Episcopal Churches in the Counties of York and Cumberland."

16. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, referred to as "the society" later in this paper, was organized in 1701. Using private contributions, it sent more than 300 Anglican missionaries to colonial America, some 47 of whom served in Pennsylvania. In addition to providing most of their financial support, the society sent many Bibles and other religious works, for use in congregational libraries.

17. Reprinted in an article by Benjamin F. Owen in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 24 (1900): 468-71 (hereafter cited as *PMHB*).

18. The name *Christ* for this church first

appears in 1748 and is used to describe it in this paper. In the eighteenth century it was usually called the *Huntington church*. The term *White church* did not appear until long after the period covered by this paper.

19. The text of the 1748 petition is in William Stevens Perry, ed., *Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church*, 2 (1876): 254-5 (hereafter cited as Perry, *Historical Collections*). For the actual signatures, see Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (hereafter cited as SPG), Letters to and from Missionaries, Series E, volume 16, page 119, microfilm.

20. Reprinted in an article by Benjamin F. Owen in the *PMHB*, 24 (1900): 476-8. Craig reported that between June 1751 and June 1752 he had performed 170 baptisms, administered communion to 117 persons, and had 915 "souls" in five congregations under his care. The numbers for Christ church were 55, 22, and 359 respectively.

21. Barton's first report, dated "Huntingdon . . . Novr. 8th, 1756, is in Perry, *Historical Collections*, 275-81.

22. In a letter to the governor in August 1756, Barton indicated that he was then living in Reading township. He did indeed lay a formal claim to 150 acres of land in that township, but not until Dec. 16, 1766, seven years after he had left the parish and moved to Lancaster.

23. *Ibid.*, 278, 276. One should approach with a proper degree of skepticism the numbers which any reporters use at any time. To find 2,000 Anglican church members in 1756 it would be necessary to travel very far afield indeed from the Huntington parish. There is good reason to believe that ministers often attracted nonmembers to their services, especially in areas where there were few, if any, resident clergymen. These Dissenters, as Anglican missionaries called them, should not be included in any count of members. The differences colonial Anglican ministers reported among

communicants, baptisms, and listeners were usually very great. Barton's interest in converting Indians should be seen as part of the society's interest in both colonial natives and slaves.

24. Pennsylvania State Archives, RG-21, Records of the Proprietary Government, Executive Correspondence, #1249 and #1255.

25. Perry, *Historical Collections*, 282, 285-6. For the signatures, see SPG, Letters to and from Missionaries, Series B, volume 21, page 306, microfilm.

26. Perry, *Historical Collections*, 353.

27. John Andrews is the only minister of the Huntington parish whose biography is in the *Dictionary of American Biography*. It appears in 1 (1928): 293-4. In 1785 he took charge of an Episcopal academy in Philadelphia. When it was absorbed into the University of Pennsylvania in 1791, he became vice provost of the university and in 1810 provost.

28. Ronald E. Geesey made copies of seven letters which passed between Daniel Batwell and the society. The first was dated April 5, 1774, and the last September 29, 1775. These copies are in the Daniel Batwell file (16778) in the Historical Society of York County and in Batwell's file in the ACHS. For documents relating to Batwell's arrest and imprisonment, see *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series 3: 109-13, 116, 122-3 and *ibid.*, First Series 6:144. For Batwell's memorial to the commission inquiring into the losses of Loyalists, see Henry James Young, comp., *York County, Pennsylvania, in the American Revolution: A Source Book* (York, 1940), Red Series 2: 430-4.

29. Perry, *Historical Collections*, 488-9.

30. Mittimus of James Nailer to Major James McCammont, Carlisle, Sept. 23, 1777, *Pennsylvania Archives*, Second Series 3: 111-2.

31. Daniel Batwell to John Hancock, York prison, Oct. 1, 1777, *ibid.*, 112, 116.

32. Information in File 16778, Histori-

cal Society of York County.

33. For information on some active Loyalists in the Bermudian settlement, see James P. Myers, Jr., "The Bermudian Creek Tories," *Adams County History*, 3 (1997): 4-40.

34. There is a brief biography of Campbell in Richard A. Harrison, *Princetonians, 1769-1775: A Biographical Dictionary* (Princeton, 1980), pp. 76-77. The information given there on Campbell's American career is quite incomplete. See also *A History of the York County Academy, York, Pennsylvania* (York, 1953), p. 18.

35. On June 13, 1944 the late Byrle F. MacPherson copied longhand from records in the office of the York County Prothonotary testimony ordered by the Court of Common Pleas in the case of the Protestant Episcopal Church at Huntington versus Robert Bigham, July term 1785. This longhand copy has been in the files of the ACHS since 1983. Diligent efforts by the staff of the York County Archives in 1998 failed to locate the original. Consequently, the longhand copy has been used in preparing this paper. All quotations from the testimony have been taken from it.

36. For some reason, six of the men scheduled to give testimony did not participate: John Wilson, Leonard Hatton, John Maxwell, Charles Coulson, John Neely, and John Wierman. Each could have added something valuable to the record.

37. In a letter written to Richard Peters in 1760, Baltzer Spangler stated that, "in the deep Snow, in the year 1739 or 1740," he and a neighbor went to Philadelphia to urge Thomas Penn to lay out a town "for Tradesmen, etc." The proprietor agreed. The town was York (*An Anniversary Celebration Commemorating the 225th Year of the Founding of York, Pennsylvania, 1741-1966* [n.p., 1966], front cover).

38. Land Paper 11416, Historical Society of York County. Copy in the ACHS.

39. As recorded in McGrew's testimony, the text of the receipt was: "Recd 1st May

1774 from Jno Wogan five pounds seven Shills & 6d in order to carry ye same to my Brother Rd Peters wth a Letter Wm Peters." In 1760-1765 William Peters was his brother's successor as secretary of the land office.

40. The George Smith who made some surveys in early Adams county may well have been the man who studied law with Thomas Cookson and was admitted to the Lancaster county bar in 1743. If so, he probably worked for a time with his mentor, who was deputy surveyor as well as attorney. After Cookson's death in 1753, George Stevenson married his widow. Since surveyors were not required to deposit their field books with the land office, they often turned them over to a successor.

41. Copied Survey A-24, p. 113, Pennsylvania State Archives; unnumbered survey, ACHS.

42. Common Pleas Docket, York County, Oct. 1791-Dec. 1794, p. 238, York County Archives; York County Deed 2-H, p. 444.

43. Patent H-8, p. 484, Pennsylvania

State Archives. At no time was the validity of the Armor patent removed. Christ Church had to buy land it had long claimed to be its own.

44. John Campbell was living in York as late as 1800 and in Carlisle by 1810. In 1790 and again in 1795, giving his address as York, he advertised in the York newspaper that the Huntington township glebe land was for rent. He continued some association with Christ Church even after he moved to Carlisle. The ACHS has the original of an agreement he made in January 1810 leasing the "Church Glebe" for a period of one year to William Owens.

45. Abraham Fickes is first assessed as owner of the former glebe in 1841. The area reserved for the graveyard was surveyed in 1863 and found to contain 1 acre 95 perches. The deed transferring this tract and the property in York Springs to the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania was dated January 3, 1883. Adams County Deed, JJ, p. 234.