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REPORTS UPON THE EARLY HISTORY OF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES.

[The origin and character of the sketches of the early history of local Presbyterian churches, whose publication is here begun, are set forth in the editorial contained in this number of the JOURNAL. In printing them the effort is made not only to be accurate, but also to reproduce in each case the original peculiarities of the manuscript. In regard to the two now appearing, it may be remarked that they are unsigned and undated, but they are written by the same hand, and by a comparison with a signed document of the Rev. Nathaniel Irwin belonging to the Taylor collection,¹ it is placed beyond question that both of these Memoirs were written by him.]

Memoirs of the Presby^{tn}. Ch. of Neshaminy.

The Presbyterian Church of Neshaminy is so called from its situation on the South branch of the Neshaminy Creek. It has also been called "the Forks of Neshaminy," as the building is situated, and the worshippers generally reside, in the forks of that Creek—The house of public worship is in Warwick Township in the County of Bucks about three miles distant from the line of Montgomery County & about twenty miles nearly due North of the City of Philad^a. A religious Society was first

¹ See the JOURNAL, vol. ii, p. 218.

his being much inclined to travel & being much absent from his Pastoral charge— On one of these expeditions he died in the 1772 in the Island of Barbadoes whether he had gone to solicit benefactions for the College of New-Jersey— He was succeeded [Aug]¹ October 1774 by Nath^l Irwin the present Pastor The Stated worshippers at the time—¹ of his settlement were near 200 families. They have been reduced, chiefly by migration to about 150. Of these however some are not Pew-holders— [The Church was incorporated by a Law of the State of Pennsy^a. passed Sept^r. 20th. 1782—]¹ Old & new side united with the utmost cordiality in his Call nor has the Spirit of party appeared among them ever since. The Church was incorporated by a Law of Pennsy^a. passed the 20th. day of Sept^r. 1782— The Rev^d. M^r. Gellatly a seceding Minister of talents & character [married]¹ from Scoland, married into the family of Robt^t. Bready then a Member of this Church & attached to the party of M^r. M^cHenry— This event conspiring with the death of M^r. M^cHenry which happened about the same time, made a favourable opening for the Seceders coming in & establishing an altar in this place— They embraced the opportunity, & attached a few families to them & made use of the old Church as their place of public worship. M^r. Gellatly however died & altho' M^r. Marshal* endeavoured to keep the stream running, it is long since dried up— All the seceders have returned: the Bready family only excepted—

Memoirs of the Presbyterian Church of Deep-run.

This Church is situated near the centre of Bucks County about thirty three miles [North]¹ nearly due North from Philad^a. It was founded about the year 1732 & after receiving occasional supplies for five or six years had for its first Stated Pastor the Rev^d. Francis M^cHenry. This worthy Man was licensed in the Kingdom of Ireland, arrived in America in the fall of the year 1737 & in the following year was ordained at

* Now of Philadelphia.

¹ Erased.

the Forks of Neshaminy & installed as Pastor of that Church & Deep which he served alternately till the time of his Death which was on the 23^d. of January 1757 In the times of the division of the Presbyterian Church in America he joined what was called the Old side but did not sign [the protest]¹ that shibboleth of the day, *the protest*—He was moreover so exceedingly moderate & prudent in his Conduct that when men became cooler both sides admired his Character & conduct He was succeeded in the Pastoral Charge of [Deep Run]¹ this Church by the Rev^d. James Lata who was ordained & installed at Deep Run Feb^r. 19th 1762 By his [faithful &]¹ able & faithful ministrations the Church, which has suffered much during the Vacancy of the pulpit, revived, & nearly recovered its losses, consisting at that time of more than sixty families. The foolish interference & rash speeches of a few Weak people respecting M^r. Lata's Marriage causing some disturbance in the place he sought & obtained a Dismission on the 12th. of April 1770. The same year he became the Pastor of the Church of Chesnut Level where he continues to adorn the Christian & ministerial Characters—The Last Stated Minister of this Church was the Rev^d. James Grier who was ordained & installed June the 1776 & finished his short but marked course Oct^r. 19th 1791. For gifts & for graces M^r. Grier was equally distinguished. Had he not been impeded in his course by a weakly or disordered constitution he had left most of his fellows far behind. [As it was]¹ with all his infirmities he was a close, experimental, pathetic & eminently useful preacher But altho' he was instrumental in forming many sons & daughters for glory in Deep Run he could not stop the course of migration & consequent diminution observable in most Country Churches in the lower parts of Pennsy^a. The congregation at present consists of about thirty five families & is by no means in a condition to support a Minister—They have hopes, however, of settling one in conjunction with the Neighboring Church of [Deep]¹ Tinecum the places of worship being only about 6 miles distant from each other—In their weak state they derive some support

¹ Erased.

form a convenient Glebe & Parsonage, [100 acres of the]¹ which they possess. 100 acres of the Land was a present to the Church from the late Will^m. Allen Esq^r. The Church was incorporated under the late Law of Pennsy^a. authorizing the Gov^r. to grant Charters of incorporation. The most remarkable events in this Church happened in the Vacancy between the Incumbency of M^r. M^cHenry & that of M^r. Lata—About the time of the decease of the former that is in the year 1757, some seceding Ministers lately arrived from Scotland [began]¹ came into this place, bearing in [their]¹ hand[s]¹ their New Covenant, arallying the people around this as a Standard. About 10 families who had belonged to this Church joined them & formed a small Society called the Plains which is now no more—The spirit of controversy (as usual) coming in with this new System of doctrine infected all Ranks. From the people it proceeded to the priests. The Rev^d. Doct^r. Allison Vice Provost of the College of Philad^a. was engaged to become the Champion of the good old cause. Mr. Gellatly one of the most eminent of the Seceding Ministers took up the gantlet in favour of the covenanted reformation as it was called—These Spiritual gladiators in the summer of the year 1759 Mounted Stages erected for the purpose near the Church. An immense Crowd of Spectators not only from Deep Run but many neighbouring Churches animated their courage & waited anxious the grand event—the contest was continued with various success from Midday till Night—Doctr. Allison being the elder man and a person who feared nor man nor Devil browbeat his adversary, but could not silence or confound him. Each party therefore went away crying Victory & more confirmed in their principles than before—

[To be continued.]

¹ Erased.