
In Memoriam

Frederick W. Nicolls

At a special meeting of the vestry of Christ Church, held in the vestry room on May 18, 1911, the following action was taken:

The vestry has heard with deep sorrow of the death of Frederick W. Nicolls, which occurred at his home in this city on May 16, 1911. As a member of this vestry and as its clerk he was attentive and efficient in the performance of his duties and as a member of the Church he was constant in his attendance at its services and well exemplified in his life his Christian profession. His aims were lofty, his purpose unselfish, his assistance in good works ready and zealous and his treatment of others courteous, kind and generous. With an unusual measure of ability and a self forgetting industry he bore well his part in all the relations of life, achieved an enviable position in his profession and in the community and commanded the respect and regard of all with whom he came in contact and the devoted affection of his friends.

The vestry tenders to his family its sincere sympathy and as a mark of its respect for his memory, will attend his funeral in a body, and directs that a copy of these proceedings be transmitted to the family and furnished to the newspapers for publication.

From the minutes.

Attest: Edwin L. Mayer, Clerk pro tem.

Appendix A

Addenda from Original Sources



THE SEAL OF THE S. P. G.

REPORT SENT BY THE REV. DR. BEARCROFT, AUGUST 19th,
1760 TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

"There are two Frontier Counties, in which the Society have no Mission at all. In & about Reading the chief Town of Berks, a Mission might be opened to great advantage; and the People are now about framing a petition to the Society & making a Subscription in order if possible to obtain an English Missionary in those places where there is at present scarce any religious Worship, except what is kept among the Germans in their own Language.

An Appeal

TO THE VENERABLE SOCIETY FOR PROPAGATING THE GOSPEL
IN FOREIGN PARTS:

The humble Representation of the subscribers, Inhabitants of the county of Berks in the province of Pennsylvania.
Sheweth,

That the said county is a very large and growing one, situated on the frontiers of said province and hath never yet had any English Minister of any denomination settled in it, nor hath it had the happiness of being visited often by any of the Reverend Clergy of the interior counties, there being none whose cure is so near to us as to allow them to come hither without neglect of their proper parishioners.

That we much lament the case of our children and families who live entirely destitute of those instructions which we in our younger days had the happiness to be blest with in our native places, and are justly apprehensive that unless the Venerable Society will be pleased to extend their pious and charitable care to us by fixing a missionary among us, we shall have the mortification of seeing our children brought up without any Idea of public worship or religious Ordinances.

That in this distress, having invited the Rev'd Doctor William Smith up to preach among us and having received encouragement from him to lay our case before your venerable body (whose tender concern for the extension of Christianity & welfare of His Majesty's Colonies have long been conspicuous), we have presumed to apply for your assistance humbly praying that you would be pleased to send over a Missionary to reside in Reading, the chief town of the county aforesaid, and to officiate also at Molattin a place fifteen Miles distant, where a church has for many years been built by a Society of English and Swedes who are desirous of having a Missionary of the Church of England and join with us in this application.

That in order to induce the Venerable Society to grant our said request we have in conjunction with the said Molattin Congregation entered into a Subscription obliging ourselves to pay yearly to such Missionary the sum of Sixty pounds Pennsylvania money, being about Thirty-eight pounds Sterling over and above what the Society may be pleased to allow him; which sum was readily subscribed by the inhabitants who seem resolved to give all further encouragement in their power to any worthy Minister the Society may be pleased to send over, for which purpose our best services shall not be wanting.

That for want of Ministers of the Church of England in these parts many people sincerely disposed to be among her members are drawn after various sorts of Sectaries, and which is still worse the Roman Catholic priests are making converts among us to the great grief of your petitioners and others, and that we believe a pious Ministry of the Church of England would be able to promote the interests of piety and virtue and to prevent a great body from leaving the Church for want of opportunity of attending public worship.

That if the Society have no particular person in view for us as Missionary, there is a young Gentleman Mr. Joseph Mather now in London, born of creditable parents in this province and educated at the College of Philadelphia, who we believe would do us good service if he could be prevailed upon to come to this place and undertake the fatigues to which a new Mission near the frontiers must necessarily be subject.

William Bird & others.

THE REV. ALEXANDER MURRAY WRITES FROM READING, DATED
APRIL 9th, 1763.

"After my arrival here I lost no time in visiting the families of our Communion throughout my Mission. In this district of it, where the County Town of Reading lies, there are seven families of these amounting to the number of 48 Souls, of which twelve are under 7 years of age."

"In Morlatton the other District of the Mission, there are 36 families of our Church consisting of 232 Souls, whereof 65 are under 7 years of age; all of these are baptised to a very few, being chiefly of Swedish Extract."

"What the number of Inhabitants in this County is I have not been able to learn, only in this Town, which was founded about 11 years ago. There are 210 families, that is about 1300 persons, young and old, 110 of these families are German Lutherans, who have a minister of their own, and about half as many German Calvinists, the rest chiefly Quakers and a few Papists with 6 or 7 families belonging to our Church. The County for Miles round this is thickly peopled, but what few than Germans and Quakers, the former being computed 12 to 1 of all other nations together, and seem to be abundantly well provided in Teachers of one denomination or another, and as long as they are so Blindly attached to their Native tongue as they are at present an English Minister can be of no great service to them. For tho' they might be at no loss for English School masters yet they choose to send their Children rather to German Schools, which they have everywhere in great plenty.

I am, Rev'd Sir, &c.,

Alexander Murray.

In June 25th, 1765, he reports the congregation increased to 22 families, with 30 families at Morlatton, making 331, young and old. He baptised 39 children, and three adults, including an Attorney at Law who was bred among the Baptists and Quakers. He sometimes uses the Court House, and sometimes a private dwelling for services.

In 1765 the Churchwardens and Vestry of the Episcopal Congregation at Morlatton earnestly appeal for an additional stipend of 20 pounds.

Signed by

John Kerlin, John Warren, Wardens.
John Godfrey, George Douglass, Mounce Jones, Peter Jones
and John Old, Vestrymen.

Second Report of Dr. Murray

Reading, 25, March, 1769

REV'D SIR,

The Catechumens I have under my charge make a proficiency to my wish & are become rather fond than backward as at first to undergo public examination in Church at stated times. To forward ye education & to instruct several of ye older poor people, I have occasion for some small tracts such as Lewis's Catechism, 4 doz., Treatise on that subject. There being no English Minister here before me, that sacred ordinance had been so generally lost, that it costs me unspeakable pains to remove ye people's prejudices & gain but a few to ye celebration of it, but as I have now 15 communicants I trust in God more will be encouraged to follow ye example. As I have more difficulties to conquer on this head than any else I must earnestly beg some suitable Tracts for my assistance. May I also crave 2 doz. small Husbandman's Manuel, 3 doz. Bp Gibson's Family prayer, 4 doz.; Do on ye Sacrament, 6 do.; or any the most approved, short, plain common prayer Books & 1 doz. Bibles.

In Sept. 1767 when I was recovering from ye ague I was advised to ride into ye Mountainous grounds & to change ye air for the better confirming my health. Accordingly I was lead to traverse ye north west parts of this county till I came in yt course upon ye Banks of ye Susquehannah about 66 miles from here where several places had been planted by the Dutch and English who brought me four children to be

baptized after the form used in our Church; tho' ye father of one of ym was popish and both parents of another were Presbyterians. The Parents of ye other two were German Lutherans to whom our Liturgy is entirely agreeable. After that I was requested to proceed nine miles farther up the River to Baptize four more at Fort Augusta,* which is ye farthest inhabited part yet of this country; The Parents of these professed themselves church people & lamented that their poverty had shut them up in a Wilderness at a distance from every place of public worship & indeed all ye different families as well as those that I had an opportunity of conversing wth in these places, modestly besought me to visit them again if it was but to christen ye children but once in a year or two as there was no English Clergyman of any persuasion in ye county but myself; & they never expected ye Dutch Ministers would visit them as they were unable to pay for their trouble and expences & the distance was too great to venture out to the highest of them wt their children thro' an inhospitable Forest of 30 miles which disjoins ym from ye more thick inhabited parts of ye country. In this pitiable situation my heart bled for them but hardly knew how to gratify their ardent desires and could only give them some distant hopes of seeing me again & endeavored to exhort them in some way suitable to yr case inculcating the special necessity of private & family devotion in the meantime till ye Plantation by a more settled peace increased & that then ye Society might think of some means to supply yr spiritual wants. But alas to ye reproach of Christianity, of humanity indeed! These very people in about four months after this were all of a sudden disturbed by the merciless fury of one Frederick Stump, one of whose children I had also baptized, who wt his servant murdered nine Indians who lived thereabouts and tho' this horrid crime was immediately resented by his neighbors & he apprehended, yet they tho' innocent were all alarmed, and so a few only quickly abandoned their habitations for fear of the avenging hand of a ferocious injured nation, and were reduced wt yr wives and children to the last extremities of poverty & want, & dared not venture back to yr Plantations till the conclusion of the Indian Treaty held by Sr Wm Johnson last Fall at Fort Stanwix, when this massacre wt other causes of yr discontent was inquired into & they appeased; and satisfied to cede their lands at Fort Augusta & for a considerable distance to ye back of that and received the compensation agreed upon from the Honourable Mr. Penn's Commissioners who assisted at this treaty. And now that it hath pleased God to restore peace to these unfortunate adventurers they are with numbers besides hastening back wt heart and hand to their desolate habitations & afford a promising prospect of forming an extensive settlement about Fort Augusta where ye lands are rich, high and healthy, & will ere long be divided from this county of Berks into one by themselves, & their County Town will be where ye Fort now stands conveniently situated for communication & Trade at ye Forks of ye East and West Great Branches of the Susquehannah, as you may see in the maps of this Province, & is about 75 miles from this Town thro' which the Inhabitants there must pass to Philadelphia & wt that view ye lands adjoining ye Fort were in January last laid out into a proprietary mannon & a public road from there to this town, confirmed by our Governour & Council, which will be of singular advantage to both places, as it opens thro' them a shorter way than ever of carrying the Indian Furs, &c., chiefly by water from as far back as Fort Pitt & ye Illinois to ye main staple at Philada.

In this view of things it might not be beneath ye care of ye Society to become ye first religious Patrons of this infant Colony at Fort Augusta & such early notice taken of them it is likely would attach them to the Interests of our Church above all others by whom they had been overlooked in yr low & mean beginnings. They were all desirous to see me again at more leisure, & I could have wished to have stayed longer among them then & performed more ministerial duties but a change of weather obliged me to return soon for fear of a relapse at that distance from home. But should this Colony make such

progress as is generally expected I might once more go out into it, & learn what manner ye Society cou'd be of some service to it & whether a Schoolmaster would not in the first place be the fittest instrument to instruct & initiate the People & yr children. The principles of our Church imbibed by these in youth wou'd leave some lasting impressions in her favour for life. I was to have advised the Society of this excursion last Spring but the dispersion of the Planters made me think my accounts then wou'd savour only of useless ostentation, therefore I forebore. There will be upwards of one hundred families settled ye ensuing Summer within twelve miles of Fort Augusta. I shall be glad in short to know the Society's mind wth regard to them & shall wth ye greatest cheerfulness do what lies in my small power in this or in anything else they shall judge may answer ye pious ends of yr Mission, let ye task be ever so laborious. If I was to be sent out in ye Society's name it were not amiss that I had transmitted me such small Tracts as I have requested for my people here, especially a pretty many of the Husbandman's Manuals & Bishop Beveridge's Tracts on ye excellency of the Common Prayer to be distributed among the people in general.

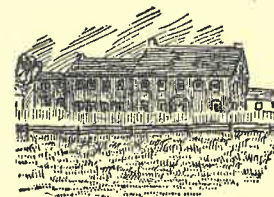
I am, wth real esteem,

Revd Sir, &c.,

ALEXr MURRAY.

*Fort Augusta was one of the four barricaded posts in Berks County, to protect the settlers from the Indians, and were places of refuge in the time of danger.

Fort Augusta was the furthestmost post and was stronger and larger than any of the others. It was situated at the forks of the Susquehannah, where the town of Sunbury now is. Berks County then extended to that distance, but was afterwards divided and two other counties were formed from what was originally the one County.



The Murray Homestead afterwards in possession of the Haak family, located on the north side of Perkiomen Avenue, between 15th and 16th Sts.



The Corner-Stone from the Murray Home

Second Petition of the Reading Vestry

The petition of Churchwardens and Vestry of the Episcopal Congregation at Reading in the County of Berks and province of Pennsylvania,

Most Humbly Sheweth,

That your petitioners do with the sincerest gratitude acknowledge the important favor shewed them in opening a mission for the relief of their spiritual wants in this frontier part of His Majesty's Colonies, and in return, are disposed to do everything incumbent on them to settle it on a respectable and lasting foundation, to the best of their abilities. With this view your petitioners lately addressed the General Assembly of this province for the benefit of a Lottery to assist them in Building an Episcopal Church in the County Town of Reading and accordingly an Act was readily passed granting them, (among others), Three Hundred and fifteen pounds for that pious and commendable purpose. To this sum your petitioners have bound themselves to add Two Hundred pounds.

We have good reason to expect, that when our Church is finished many more will associate with us and enable us soon after to purchase a Glebe and parsonage house.

And we hope from the growth of our Congregation to raise our Minister's Salary by renting the pews to more than the amount of what we have at this time concluded upon which tho' much under what we could wish is in our present situation as much as we can Grant.

We are conscious that we have done and are still ready to do as much for the support of our Mission as any people in like circumstances perhaps in America. And while we are in a fair way of increasing more and more and are struggling in our infancy to provide a decent place of public worship and a better maintenance for our pastors in time coming, we would wish that the Society could generously enough come in to aid our cheerful tho' weak endeavors and grant the present incumbent on their part Fifty pounds sterling of annual Salary, which considering the Labors of this extensive mission and the growing expenses of Living, is with all we can yet contribute but moderate encouragement for a Clergyman in it and a narrow subsistence for a family.

Reading as it is confessedly the second Inland town in America and but thirteen years standing has the most promising appearance of soon becoming the first, as the River Schuylkill, on whose Banks it is pleasantly and commodiously situated is in a great part already cleared for Navigation and trade to as far as the flourishing metropolis of Philadelphia.

And as it adds to its Honor and happiness that it has so early attracted the affectionate notice of the Most Venerable Society, your petitioners hope by their conduct on all occasions to shew themselves worthy of the continuance of their countenance & patronage.

To know the success of our humble petition would not a little contribute to forward our present public undertakings and which are confident will be totally marred in the event of our worthy Missionary's removing before they are finished, which it is evident he will be reduced to the necessity of doing under the present circumstances. But this would fain hope the Society in their abundant care and goodness, will timeously prevent by complying at this critical juncture if possible with our so necessary and earnest request, which with all due deference we submit to your most serious consideration.

And your petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray, &c.,

James Dimes, (probably Diemer)

E. Biddle,

Churchwardens.

John Patton,

F. Price,

Jas. Whitehead,

Vestrymen.

Reading, June 12th, 1765.

In December 1771, Dr. Murray negotiated the sale of his home to his friend, Edward Biddle, but it seems that the sale was never consummated because of the objections of Mr. Biddle's wife. The ballot had not yet been given to women, but it seems evident that the veto power was already possessed by them as the following letter indicates. It was addressed to Mr. Edward Biddle, Attorney at Law, Reading, and is as follows:

Reading, 5th. December 1771.

SIR:

In case your Lady should not, by the 15th. day of May next, be reconciled to the purchase you have made of the House and Lot I now live on, I hereby engage to release you and all concerned therein, from the Articles of agreement Relating thereto, which we entered into the 2 instant, and will Retain the Premises for my own use; I am

Sir

Your Most Affectionate and Humble Servant,

Alex. Murray.

Mr. Edward Biddle, in 1777, then in a declining state of health, and no longer in Congress, apparently entertained sentiments not accordant with the measures pursuing; and in the fervid style of elocution, for which he was distinguished, he often exclaimed, that he really knew not what to wish for. "The subjugation of my country," he would say, "I deprecate as a grievous calamity and yet sicken at the idea of thirteen, unconnected, petty democracies; if we are to be independent, let us, in the name of God, at once have an empire, and place Washington at the head of it."

"The Sewing Society of Christ Church, Reading." Book in possession of Thos. D. Stichter, 1884, given by him to Mrs. C. E. H. Jones. Constitution in handwriting of Dr. Morgan. Its object, according to the Constitution, was to aid the pecuniary interests of the Church and promote its prosperity in general. Active membership \$1.00 per annum, Honorary membership for life \$10.00. Officers: Director, Vice Director, Secretary and Treasurer and 7 members of the Board of Managers, held weekly meetings and annual meetings on Easter Monday.

Directress to have the authority to contract sales to the amount of \$15.00, without consent of the Managers. To sign all orders on the Treasurer.

First Officers: Directress, Miss Mary Epplee; Vice Directress, Mrs. Mary Gitson; Secretary, Mrs. Elizabeth Morris; Treasurer, Miss Harriet Baird. Managers: Mrs. Margaret Richards, Mrs. Elizabeth Anderson, Miss Lydia Gordon, Miss Elizabeth Baum, Miss Martha R. Baird, Miss Jane D. Biddle, Mrs. Lydia Ann Hiester.

Mrs. Mary Richards, succeeded Miss Epplee as Directress. The Society held several fairs. The earliest date anywhere in the book of minutes is 1838. No minutes entered after 1851.

The Conditions,
ON WHICH THE PEWS IN
CHRIST CHURCH, IN READING,
WILL BE RENTED, ARE AS FOLLOWS.

EACH Pew will be set up to auction by its number. The person who bids the greatest sum will be entitled to the exclusive use of the Pew at all times, when the Church is open for divine service, or other public occasion, for one year, from the fifteenth day of August, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-six.

The one-half of the sum bidden must be paid on or before the fifteenth day of next September, and the remaining half on or before the fifteenth day of February, A. D. eighteen hundred and twenty-seven, and so on half yearly, in advance, as long as the renter has possession of the Pew.—But the renter may pay the whole year's rent in advance if he thinks proper. If the rent is not paid at any time for thirty days after it becomes due, and has been demanded in writing, the Vestry may, if they think proper, take possession of the Pew, or rent it to another person, and may also proceed to recover the rent due by suit before a Justice of the Peace, in the same manner as other debts under one hundred dollars are or may be recoverable by law.

If the Vestry wishes to repossess the Pew, or the renter to give it up at the expiration of any year, notice must be given in writing three months before, otherwise it will be considered that the renter will continue to hold the Pew for the ensuing year at the same rent, and on the same terms he held it for the year preceding.

Every person who rents a Pew will sign a copy of these conditions, stating the number of Pew or Pews he or she rents, and the rent to be paid, and will be entitled to a copy of these Conditions, together with a certificate signed by the Wardens of the Church, in behalf of the Vestry, of the number of the Pew, and the rent to be paid, and that the renter is entitled to the use of the Pew for one year, agreeably to the said Conditions.

The six Pews, numbered 26, 27, 1, 2, 51, and 52, are reserved for the use of strangers, and those inhabitants belonging to the congregation who may find it inconvenient to rent Pews.

We, the subscribers have rented the Pews as per numbers, set opposite our respective names/subject to the above Conditions, and shall also set opposite our names.

Witness our hands, &c.

We, the Wardens of Christ Church, in Reading, do, for the Vestry of the said Church, certify that
Nathl. P. Hobart, Esq. has rented Pew No. *34*, for one year, for
Eighteen dollars subject to the above Conditions. Witness our hands,
the *fifteenth* day of *August*, 18 *26*

Nathl. P. Hobart
Geo. W. Stearns } *Wardens*

Recd. Payment 14/11/26 from Nathaniel P. Hobart Esq. Nineteen Dollars
Half Year's advance
Bennett Nolan Treasurer

From the Original, in the Possession of J. Bennett Nolan, Esq.

Some lawyer-vestrymen evidently prepared this elaborate form, at the time of the building of the brick church. It seems to have been in use for some time.

Memorial to Bishop Howe

Tablet in Saint Luke's Church, Philadelphia.

"Mark Anthony DeWolfe Howe, born 1808, died 1895, rector of St. Luke's Church 1841-1871, Bishop of Central Pennsylvania, 1871-1895," and beneath is the inscription:

"A wise father in home, in parish and in diocese;
A lover of friendship and a constant friend;
Firm in his opinions yet speaking evil of no man;
Endowed with the wisdom of men and with that which cometh from above.
A priest who ministered with reverence and dignity;
A preacher who made his hearers feel the life and power of the Word of God;
A bishop who served well his own flock,
And strengthened the counsels of the Church.
This tablet is placed here that he may still speak."

From a book on the family by de B. Randolph Keim, a cousin, (though not a first cousin) of my mother, Mary May Keim Weidman.

In 1915 a lot on N. 5th Street, the present site, was given by Mrs. Rebecca Price, wife of John Price, a former warden of St. Mary's was conveyed by James Diemer, also a warden to James May, Marks John Biddle and George Douglass in trust for the erection of an Episcopal Church and as a burial ground for Episcopalians, etc. The name was changed to Christ Church after the church in Philadelphia where Washington had worshipped and whose rector, William White, had been chaplain of the Continental Congress.

In 1822 a building committee was named composed of George de B. Keim, Benneville Keim and Nathaniel P. Hobart to which William Pendleton Orrick (who married Ann May Keim, a daughter of George de B. Keim) was added. On May 10, 1826, in the presence of the Diocesan Convention the church was consecrated by Rt. Reverend Bishop White.

In 1837 a parsonage was purchased by the ladies of the congregation. In 1842 a small gallery was erected in the east end of the church, containing 8 pews to accommodate 40 persons. In 1843 the interior walls were painted a stone color.

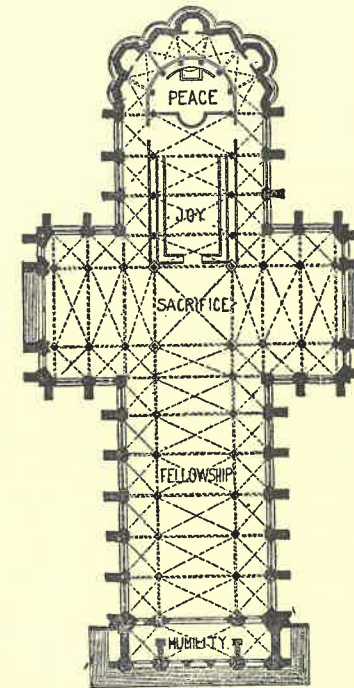
In 1847-8 the church edifice was enlarged and greatly beautified. It was reopened by the Bishop of the diocese with appropriate services on the fourth Sunday after Epiphany, June 30th, 1848. The edifice was extended 32 feet, 6 inches by removing the tower at the west end. The vestibule was enlarged the width of the church. The entire interior was altered and handsomely decorated in gothic style, 26 pews were added and the windows were painted in imitation of ground glass with stained borders. A superb triple window of stained glass in the chancel was the gift of Gen. George May Keim.* The cost of these improvements was \$2,818.17 was made up by subscriptions \$2,451, and contributed by the Ladies' Society \$406.32. The furnishing of the church cost as follows: Carpets for the chancel, aisles and vestry room, \$128.38; altar cloth made in Philadelphia, \$92.95; one Episcopal chair and two others, one for chancel, \$50; baptismal font of sandstone, \$50. Lettering of tablets, \$30; bibles and prayer books, etc., \$32; a total of \$382.33, making a grand total of \$3,200.

In a note the author says that this information was gleaned from L: Papers relating to St. Mary's Mission

of the Church of England in Reading, Pa. received by Rev. R. W. Morgan, Rector of Christ Church from J. Pringle Jones, 1843; annotated by Henry May Keim;† also the Episcopal Church of Reading, Pa. by Henry M. Keim, Penna. Mag. of Hist. & Biog. Vol. iv, 1880; also private parochial register of Rev. Richard U. Morgan, D.D. commencing with his ministry, May 8, 1922; also some memoirs and a kindly loaned—by his son-in-law, Mr. Wilcox of West Chester, Pa.

This window preceded the one of the four Apostles, before the present window.

My mother's brother died before this book on the family was published. M. D. W.



PLAN OF AN ANCIENT CRUCIFORM CHURCH—
with Symbolic Interpretation.

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L'Envoi

The work of gathering together the material for this publication has been a labor of love, and a willing payment for the debt I owe to the past in my associations with Reading and Berks County. May it inspire the reader with its message and record, and inspire others to carry on the noble work begun and already pursued for the greater glory of Almighty God.

WILLIAM Du HAMEL.

Saint Gabriel's Rectory,
October 15th, 1927.