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# HISTORY

OF THE

## Presbyterian Church in America,

FROM ITS ORIGIN UNTIL THE YEAR 1760.

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF ITS EARLY MINISTERS.

BY THE

REV. RICHARD WEBSTER,

LATE PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MAUCH CHUNK, PA.

WITH

*A Memoir of the Author,*

BY THE REV. C. VAN RENSSELAER, D.D.

AND

*An Historical Introduction,*

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, D.D.

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PHILADELPHIA:

JOSEPH M. WILSON,

No. 27 SOUTH TENTH STREET, BELOW CHESTNUT ST.

1857.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by  
JOSEPH M. WILSON,  
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of  
Pennsylvania.

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PHILADELPHIA.

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## CONRAD WORTS,

PROBABLY licensed\* in Germany, in consequence of some difficulty with the Dutch Reformed Cœtus, applied to the Presbytery of New Brunswick. The High-Dutch congregation of Rockaway, in Lebanon township, New Jersey, addressing the presbytery, they referred the matter to the synod, and, after their committee had taken the measures suitable to prevent injury or offence to the Dutch Reformed body, they took the congregation under their care. Worts was taken up as a probationer, September 3, 1751, Rockaway asked for him, May 9, 1752, and he was ordained their pastor on the 5th of June.

It being likely he could be more useful in another connection, he was dismissed, October 21, 1761, and probably entered into the German Reformed body.

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## JAMES FINLEY

WAS born in county Armagh, Ireland, in February, 1725, was educated under Samuel Blair, at Fagg's Manor, and accompanied† Whitefield to the Orphan-House in Georgia. He probably studied theology with his brother Samuel, at Nottingham; he was licensed by Newcastle Presbytery, and ordained pastor of East Nottingham, or the Rock, in Cecil county, Maryland, in 1752. This was a separation on the rupture from Elk River: the two parties united in 1760, McDowell giving up the charge of Elk. He engaged in teaching, and some of our best ministers were trained under his eye.

A large emigration to the Redstone country began as soon as the lands were exposed to sale. Finley crossed the Alleghanies in 1765, and again in 1767, in company with his elder, Philip Tanner; and, by direction of the synod, he supplied Ligonier and the vacancies beyond the mountains for two months, in 1771-2. His son Ebenezer removed in 1772, and became an elder in the congregation of Dunlap's Creek. Thirty-four heads of families in the com-

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\* The newspapers state that in 1752 seven German ministers arrived in New York.

† Whitefield's Letters. "Old Red Stone;" by Dr. Joseph Smith.

munion of his church took up their abode in the West; most of these were valuable men, and became elders and pillars of churches. Three of Finley's sons removed; and he asked a dismission from his charge, that he might follow them. His people, with affecting solemnity, earnestly protested against the granting it, for he was beloved greatly, and useful, and needed not to remove, being well off in the world; and that it would be an irreparable loss to part with him, especially when all around them were vacancies and no prospect of supplying them. He appealed from the judgment of the presbytery, and the synod dissolved the pastoral relation, May 17, 1782. He was not dismissed to Redstone Presbytery till April 26, 1785, and he was received by that body, June 21. He was called to Rehoboth and Round Hill, both in the Forks of Youghiogheny, in the fall of 1784, and remained there till his death, January 6, 1795.

He published a pamphlet,—“An Attempt to set the Levitical Prohibition in relation to Marriage in a true light.” He was greatly grieved at the decision of the synod in restoring to church privileges parties married within the forbidden degrees, and still more for making such marriages censurable only so far as they showed untenderness to the scruples or prejudices of well-disposed persons. This discussion probably led the synod, in 1782, to direct him to procure a copy of the Adopting Act of 1729. He could not find one. In protesting against the decision, he said, “Upon the whole, although I desire not to promote uneasiness, yet, knowing it to be my duty to testify against the declensions and dangerous innovations in our church, I am obliged by conscience to act as I do in this, and may go further, be offended who will.”

Three of his sons, Joseph, Michael, and William, were elders at Rehoboth. His son John Evans Finley settled at Fagg's Manor, and was the minister of Bracken, in Mason county, Kentucky, during the Great Revival. The Rev. Robert M. Finley is a grandson of James Finley.

On removing\* to the West, the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania intrusted important business to him, and commissioned him as a justice of the peace and a judge of the Common Pleas.

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\* Dr. Smith: Hazard's Pennsylvania Archives.