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THE FIRST GERMAN REFORMED COLONY IN VIRGINIA : 1714-1750. ✓

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Among the many nationalities composing the early colonists of Virginia the Germans were neither the last nor the least. They occupied prominent positions in the social, political, and religious life of the Commonwealth, and contributed materially to its prosperity and growth.¹ Unfortunately, the historians of Virginia have passed over, with almost total silence, this important factor, and it is only of late that the history of the German element has received any attention.²

Few of the German settlements of Virginia have a history so interesting and at the same time so complicated as that of the German Reformed colony which Governor Spotswood settled in 1714 at Germanna, on the southern branch of the Rappahannock. Owing to the lack of contemporaneous documents it was impossible, till within a few years, to present even an outline of its history, and even now several views are held as to its origin and later development. To put this whole subject on a scientific basis, it is proposed to present at length in the following pages the documents upon which this history rests. Clear and sufficient evidence will be given to show that these colonists came from Nassau-Siegen, one of the many little states which

¹ *Genealogy of the Kemper Family*, Chicago, 1899, p. 51.

² *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. IX, p. 337, ff.



HUGH LENOX HODGE, M. D., LL. D.

THE SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA : REMINISCENCES.

BY HUGH L. HODGE, M. D.

[The Rev. Edward B. Hodge, D. D., has edited and printed from the original MS. a volume of family history and reminiscences¹ dictated by his father, Dr. Hugh L. Hodge, to Harriet Woolsey, wife of the latter's son, Lenox. This volume is privately issued in a very small number of copies for the use of the late Dr. Hodge's family, with whose members the greater part of its contents deals. There are, however, reminiscences of the historic Second Church and especially of its earlier church edifice, and of its temporary decline, which are of general interest and decided value, partly as corroborating and partly as amplifying the materials we have. And these, by Dr. E. B. Hodge's permission, are here presented to a larger public.—ED.]

About this time also [1830] I became a communicant in the Second Presbyterian Church (Mr. Sanford being then pastor), to which my parents and grandparents had been devoted. This Second Presbyterian Church resulted, in a great measure from the preaching of the celebrated missionary, George Whitefield. Many of his hearers, and some persons also who belonged to the First Presbyterian Church on Market Street, worshipped in the old Academy on Fourth Street near Arch. It was termed the Whitefield Chapel. They were soon regularly organized as a church.² A lot of ground was afterwards bought at the northwest corner of Third and Arch Streets, and a building with a steeple of brick was erected about the year 1745, the Rev. Dr. Gilbert Tennent being pastor. My grandfather, Mr. Andrew Hodge, and my great-uncle, Mr. Hugh Hodge,³ were

¹*Memoranda of Family History Dictated by Hugh L. Hodge, M. D., LL. D. upon The Earnest Solicitation of His Daughter Harriet Woolsey Hodge.* n. p. n. d. [Privately printed, Philadelphia, 1903.]

²The date was December, 1743.

³Mr. Hugh Hodge's name does not appear in the list of original trustees in the charter granted by Thomas Penn and John Penn; but later (March 3d, 1780,) in "An act for re-establishing the Charter of the Second Presbyterian Church in the City of Philadelphia, &c."—E. B. H.

among the original trustees. Colonel John Bayard, who was my uncle by marriage, and whose wife, Jane, was a daughter of my grandfather, Andrew, also became a trustee. The building was situated east and west, a large front door being on Third Street, and the steeple at the opposite, or west extremity; so that the general aspect was very similar to that of St. Peter's Church at the southwest corner of Third and Pine Streets. I have distinct recollections of the appearance of this church about the beginning of the present century. A very large and high mahogany pulpit, with a staircase on either side, was placed on the north side of the church, and over it was a large sounding board, which, to my youthful imagination, suggested much danger to the preacher. In front of the pulpit was a high mahogany desk for the precentor, whose duties at that time were performed with great earnestness and zeal by Mr. Eastburn, who was afterwards ordained as an evangelist. In this station he proved exceedingly useful and popular, especially among sailors; and to his efforts we are indebted for the first mariners' church in Philadelphia and, probably, in the United States. There was a middle aisle in front of the pulpit, which, of course, was comparatively short, running from north to south to the long aisle from east to west. Most of the aisle was paved with brick; but nearly one-half toward the pulpit was covered with the tombstones of the former pastors, Tennent, Davis,¹ and Finley,¹ who were there buried in accordance with an old usage. It is much to be feared that these old and venerated stones have been lost or stolen through neglect. The pews also were of the old pattern. They were high, of simple wood, painted white and surmounted by a mahogany rail. As the aisle in front of the pulpit was curved, there was a corresponding curvature in front of the two pews at the head of the middle aisle; hence, these pews were triangular, having one long seat and one short one at right angles. There were many square pews also, especially on the southern side of the building: one of these in particular was called the Governor's, or President's, pew. It was

¹This name does not appear in the list of pastors. The epitaphs of Gilbert Tennent, Samuel Finley, and James Sproat are preserved.—E. B. H.

situated directly opposite the pulpit in the middle aisle against the Arch Street wall. It was surmounted by a wooden canopy, supported by two carved wooden columns. There is still in possession of the church a small glass chandelier which was purchased from the effects of General Washington, and tradition says that it hung in this pew. My first recollections of this chandelier were after the altering and rebuilding of the church in 1809. There were galleries on three sides of the church, which were comparatively short on the east and west extremities, while the one on the south side opposite the pulpit was long. The main door of the church was on the east side on Third Street. There was a smaller door on Arch Street toward the west end, corresponding therefore to the western aisle. There was another small door on the north side near Third Street. This opened upon a wide passage extending west from Third Street. On the north side of this passage was a high row of buildings occupied partly for stores, a carpenter shop, etc., and partly by our congregation for a lecture-room. On the western extremity of this building was a school-room, to which I once went as a pupil. The tower was on the west end of the church building. It was made of brick and was surmounted by a wooden spire, and there was a room under the tower occupied as a carpenter shop. Dr. Ashbel Green, former colleague of Dr. Sproat, was the senior pastor of the church, and Jacob J. Janeway was his colleague. The sexton was Mr. Lesley, a cabinetmaker, and the chief undertaker of the church. The church building stood some distance back of the legal line on Arch Street, so that there was a very broad pavement; and on every Sabbath morning, as soon as the services had commenced, iron chains were drawn across Arch Street and Third Street to arrest the passage of vehicles, that the congregation might not be disturbed. This privilege, which was granted in those days very respectfully to our own and other churches, was afterwards withdrawn as trespassing upon the rights of the masses. In 1808 complaints were made respecting the stability of the spire of our steeple. These complaints were considered to be well-founded, and the spire was taken down. As the congregation was then very prosperous it was determined to remodel

the whole building. Accordingly the structure was entirely demolished, except the north, south, and east walls, and in its reconstruction the space formerly occupied by the steeple was taken into the main building, which was thus greatly enlarged. The old and venerable mahogany pulpit with its appurtenances disappeared, and a neat wooden pulpit, ornamented with some carving, with a staircase on either side and a precentor's desk in front, now occupied the west end of the building. The middle aisle was now the long aisle of the church, extending east and west. The pews also were modernized, being much lower and furnished with cushions. The galleries were reversed, so that there were now two long ones and one short one, the last being at the eastern extremity. Glass chandeliers for candles, including General Washington's, appeared at regular intervals, while candelabra were affixed to the pulpit. Churches in those days were very seldom warmed. Little foot-stoves, or hot bricks, enveloped in carpeting, were often brought in by servants for the comfort of the elderly and the invalid. Just about this time stoves were introduced into our church, with their long, black pipes, extending nearly the whole length of the building and under the galleries. Wood was burned at that time, and much inconvenience was sometimes produced from the droppings of a dark fluid from the joints of the pipes. The whole interior of the building was painted white, and had a very pleasant, cheerful look. The windows were large and numerous. The exterior of the edifice was now roughcast, of a dull light color, which gave it a neat appearance. But, after all that could be said for it, the church, as reconstructed, was a long, narrow, barn-like affair, without ornaments or architectural pretensions of any kind.

The congregation re-entered their building in 1809, a large, prosperous, and united body of people. The eloquent Dr. Green was much beloved, and although often weak and nervous, always attracted large assemblies, while his less admired, but excellent colleague, Dr. Janeway, was heard with respectful attention. The church was, however, destined to sustain a great loss by the removal of their senior pastor to the presidency of the College of New Jersey at Princeton, to which situation he

was elected in June, 1812, upon the resignation of the venerable Samuel Stanhope Smith.

The duties of the congregation were too onerous for Dr. Janeway, so that an assistant became necessary. Under these circumstances Mr. Thomas H. Skinner, then about twenty-two years of age, was called to this important position. He was a young man of great talent and piety, exceedingly enthusiastic under the impulse of a warm imagination and a strong desire to do good. His style of preaching, which was very eloquent, was exceedingly diverse from the grave and didactic soundness to which this church had been accustomed. His voice and his manner corresponded to the intensity of his feelings, and he poured forth in tones of fervid eloquence, not only the blessed invitations and promises of the gospel, but also the terrible threatenings and denunciations of the law, not infrequently broaching sentiments which were thought to be not quite orthodox, and which were afterwards denominated "new school" doctrines. The excitement, therefore, was great, and at the time I left college, in 1814, was approaching its crisis. The old elders of the church, and a large number of the congregation, were so decidedly opposed to his preaching that Mr. Skinner eventually resigned his place and retired with twelve or fifteen families to a building on Locust Street, above Eighth, where the Musical Fund Hall now stands. His popularity greatly increased, and he became so strong that his friends succeeded in erecting a handsome building, which still exists in Arch Street, above Tenth. Here Dr. Skinner was so much favored as to organize a strong and devoted church, which, notwithstanding some reverses, owing to change of pastors, is now exceedingly prosperous under the pastoral care of Mr. Withrow. Soon after this event Dr. Janeway resigned his office in the church and was elected a professor of theology in the new theological seminary at Allegheny City, while Rev. Mr. Sanford, of Brooklyn, N. Y., became pastor of our church. He was a young man, and acquired much reputation as a speaker and pastor. He had lately been married. His coming was full of promise, and his preaching was generally very acceptable, so that the church was well attended, and for a time everything

seemed to be doing very well. Nevertheless, a secret dissatisfaction existed among a portion of the congregation as to the teachings and doings of the new pastor, while enthusiastic devotion prevailed among the rest. Most lamentably, this division extended to the elders and leading members of the church, so that much dissension resulted, and efforts were made both to remove and to retain Mr. Sanford. Such a state of things could not continue. Finally, the friends of the pastor, led by such excellent men as Alexander Henry and Matthew Bevan, determined to withdraw, while Mr. Robert Ralston, Mr. Charles Chauncey, and others of equal importance, adhered to the old church. But before the unnatural and unfortunate separation was accomplished the Rev. Mr. Sanford was taken ill and died, and many of us trusted that the party feelings engendered would be allayed by this solemn dispensation of Providence. It is mournful, however, to record that this was by no means the case. The feelings of both parties had become too much excited for reconciliation. Consequently, when the funeral services of Mr. Sanford had been performed in the church, all his friends, amounting to nearly one-half of the congregation, retired and organized themselves into a new church, and soon afterwards erected a commodious building at the southeast corner of Eighth and Cherry Streets. They procured as pastor the Rev. John McDowell, who for some twenty or thirty years had been a most acceptable and successful pastor at Elizabeth, N. J. The Second Church, thus reduced in numbers, obtained the services of the Rev. C. C. Cuyler, an influential clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church, of Poughkeepsie, N. Y.¹

¹One of the innovations of Mr. Sanford to the old quiet habits of the Second Church was his practice of calling upon all new members to stand up when their names were read and to give their assent to the great gospel principles of the Church and to enter into covenant with the people. In those days also it was customary at the administration of the Lord's Supper to have narrow tables, covered with white cloth and furnished with benches, extending down the aisles. To these all the communicants resorted while the elements were passed along. When some retired to their pews others took their places, so that two and even three tables were often thus filled, at each of which addresses were made by one or more clergymen. Formerly, moreover, it was cus-

In the course of a year or two it was deemed expedient to dispose of the property at the corner of Third and Arch Streets, and to erect a new building in Seventh Street, south of Arch, on the east side. The front of this building was of marble, and the interior very chaste and commodious. The pulpit was built, somewhat in the form of a mausoleum, of pure white marble on a platform about a foot high. It was about fifteen feet long and about five feet high, a complete parallelogram, at the middle portion of which was another piece of marble, five feet in length and two or three feet in height, surmounted by the cushion, in front of the pulpit, while below there was a communion table of mahogany, somewhat carved and ornamented, and covered with a slab of black marble. In the rear of the pulpit and in the recess was a tablet of white marble in memory of the first pastor, Gilbert Tennent.¹

It is a painful fact to state that neither of these two congregations, although thus well furnished with new buildings and new pastors, was at all prosperous. After many years Dr. McDowell was compelled to resign his position; and it is only within the last few years that the congregation has been much increased. It is now thriving under the care of Rev. Alexander Reed. In Seventh Street we lingered and dwindled in numbers from deaths and removals under the care of the Rev. Dr. Cuyler, and, after his death, under the Rev. Dr. Shields, now professor in the College of New Jersey.

In 1865, upon the retirement of Dr. Shields, the Rev. E. R. Beadle, who had been a missionary in Syria, and a pastor in New Orleans and also in Hartford, Conn., became our pastor. He had made a great reputation, especially as an earnest and

tomary on the Friday evening previous to the communion to distribute little lead tokens to each communicant, and it was the business of the elders to collect these as each table was filled, and before the elements were distributed. This practice, whatever may have been its utility, had been abandoned by our Church. I myself, however, well recollect its regular enforcement.

¹This tablet is to the memory, not only of Gilbert Tennent, but of George Whitefield as well, "to whose evangelistic labors the church owes its existence."—E. B. H.

eloquent preacher, a reputation which he fully maintained upon his arrival in Philadelphia. The church improved very much, but not with sufficient rapidity to satisfy the mind of our pastor, to say nothing of many of our people. The cause was attributed to the removal of influential Presbyterians from the eastern to the western part of the city. Hence, after much discussion, it was determined to sell our present church building and erect another in a more promising situation. The sale was soon effected by auction, and we, therefore, most unfortunately had no place to go to, and, what was a still more unfortunate circumstance, there was the greatest difference of opinion as to what would be a suitable location. We made a temporary engagement at Horticultural Hall, on Broad Street above Spruce, a place which proved to be very uncomfortable, and did not, therefore, in any way contribute to harmonize our sentiments. After considering various propositions, we determined to purchase the lot at the corner of Twenty-first and Walnut Streets, in the autumn of 1867. But even this resolution, although supported by a handsome subscription for the lot did not quiet our troubles. Early in January, 1868, some of our most influential people were anxious to accept a proposition to merge ourselves with the congregation in Arch Street, above Tenth. This was again the source of great difference of opinion and debate. The congregation being nearly equally divided on the subject, an appeal had to be made to the Central Presbytery of Philadelphia, who almost unanimously refused to sanction the proposed union. Notwithstanding this decision, it was impossible for some time to settle upon a locality for the church. Various points were suggested, examined, and voted upon, and it was not until the 22d of June, 1868, that a decisive vote was given in favor of the lot on the corner of Twenty-first and Walnut Streets. The ownership of the lot had by this time changed hands, and we had to give \$7,000 more than would have been required in the fall of 1867; and, moreover, although a very large majority of the opponents still adhered to the old church, still we lost several of our most influential and wealthy families. Nevertheless, the determination to go forward in what seemed to us a great and important

work for the cause of religion in general, and especially for Presbyterianism in this section of the city where a church was very much wanted, and where a population, cultivated and influential, was rapidly increasing, was rewarded by the obtaining of subscriptions amounting to some \$33,000. A highly architectural plan was prepared by Hr. Henry A. Sims, and ground was broken on the 26th day of March, 1869, and since that time we have steadily persevered under many discouragements and difficulties in the prosecution of our work, until now, in February, 1872, the walls have been erected, the roof has been finished, and the work is so far advanced that we hope to enter the building before termination of the coming spring. In November, 1868, with a view to securing a regular attendance of our members, and to increase our numbers, we commenced the erection of a plain building on the southern extremity of our lot. To this building we transferred our old pews, gas-fixtures, and part of the pulpit, and secured in this way quite a home-like, though humble, place of worship, which we occupied with mutual congratulations on the 17th of January, 1869. This experiment has been quite successful, inasmuch as our income is now sufficient for our annual expenses, including \$4,000 for the salary of our pastor, and there have been so many additions to our membership that seats can hardly be provided for them. We trust, therefore, that a very good nucleus has now been formed, under the blessing of Providence, for the resuscitation of the old Second Presbyterian Church to its former influence and usefulness at home and abroad.

“A sketch of the connection of the Hodge family with the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia, collected by the oldest survivor of the family at this time (1870), from early recollections and accounts occasionally given by friends and relatives of a former generation.” (This is copied from the paper of Sally Hodge, wife of William L. Hodge, of Washington, and formerly Sally Bayard.)

At the time of the formation or collecting of the Second Presbyterian Church, Mr. Andrew Hodge (the first), with his

son-in-law, Col. John Bayard, and his brother, Mr. Hugh Hodge, were among its most able and zealous supporters, and contributed largely by money and personal influence to the erection of the brick building at the corner of Arch and Third Streets. Here each built a pew, which, in process of time, was transmitted to their successors respectively. A congregation, large for that time, was soon collected, and the first pastor was the Rev. Gilbert Tennent, whose descendants remained in the church until within a very few years (say 1860). After the death of Mr. Hugh Hodge, his widow, the much respected and venerated Mrs. Hannah Hodge, having no children living, proposed to her nephew, Mr. Andrew Hodge, that he should take her pew as his, reserving for herself a seat in it, thus leaving his father's pew to Dr. Hodge. That transfer could not be made without the consent of the trustees of the church, as by the charter there must be a sale (in fact, but nominal in this case) to render the transfer legal. This was early effected, and the fifth pew from the pulpit on the south side of the middle aisle became the possession of Andrew Hodge, and the first pew from the pulpit on the north side of the same aisle was the property of Dr. Hodge. On his death it rested with his widow as the guardian of his sons, then children, and (so) remained during her life. It is now the property of Dr. (Hugh L.) Hodge. (Subsequently it belonged to his son, Dr. H. Lenox Hodge, a ruling elder in the church.)