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JOURNAL  
of  
The Presbyterian  
Historical Society

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Vol. XII

October, 1927

No. 8

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Published by the  
Society at 518-532 Witherspoon Building  
PHILADELPHIA

Price Fifty Cents

# JOURNAL

of

## The Presbyterian Historical Society

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The JOURNAL of the Society is published semi-annually, in April and October, under the supervision of a Publication Committee, consisting of Rev. Prof. Frederick W. Loetscher, D.D., LL.D., Editor, Rev. Louis F. Benson, D.D., and Rev. William P. Finney, D.D.

Correspondence regarding the JOURNAL should be sent to the Editor; address: Princeton, N. J.

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The JOURNAL is furnished free to members of the Society and to subscribers at fifty cents a number. Back numbers can be supplied at the same rate (Vol. I covering 1901-02; Vol. II, 1903-04; Vol. III, 1905-06; Vol. IV, 1907-08; Vol. V, 1909-10; Vol. VI, 1911-12; Vol. VII, 1913-14; Vol. VIII, 1915-16; Vol. IX, 1917-18; Vol. X, 1919-20; Vol. XI, 1921-23; Vol. XII, 1924-27).

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**JOURNAL**  
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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF  
THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR  
THE YEAR ENDING MARCH 31, 1927

In accordance with the Constitutional provision which requires that the Executive Council shall make report of its proceedings to the Presbyterian Historical Society at its Annual Meeting, the following record of its activities is respectfully submitted, covering the recently adopted year from April 1, 1926, to March 31, 1927.

With the beginning of the year, the newly elected General Secretary, Rev. William P. Finney, D.D., entered upon his office, and has endeavored to familiarize himself with its duties, and respond to the varied calls for service. As a result of the new relation with the General Assembly, the Society appears to have come to the knowledge of a wider constituency, and has carried on an extensive correspondence, particularly in response to articles appearing in the Presbyterian Magazine, which offered assistance to churches in the way of suggestion and preparation of programs for historical occasions.

Special effort has also been made in the direction of securing more complete files of church records and papers, and of impressing upon the church constituency generally that they are making history now, and that no opportunity should be lost of sending historical sermons and addresses on anniversary occasions, and all other such matter of interest, to our Society, for careful cataloguing and preservation. Fitting in with this

## THE STORY OF THE LOG COLLEGE<sup>1</sup>

BY THE REV. GEORGE H. INGRAM,  
*Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of New Brunswick.*

It is fitting in this year of the two hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Log College to tell again the story of its beginning and of the movement that it started in the Middle Colonies for religious education.

During the latter half of the seventeenth and the first part of the eighteenth centuries there was a great movement of colonists from Scotland, England, and the north of Ireland, toward the New World. These immigrants, especially in the Middle Colonies, settled in regions where there were few if any churches, and where, even when there were churches, there was a great scarcity of ministers. There were no schools; much less colleges or seminaries, for the training of young men for the ministry. The first Presbytery was organized in 1706. In 1717 the General Synod was erected with four presbyteries. The colonists were clamoring for supplies of preaching, but many of them cried in vain. What should be done? In the discussion of this question in the years following, two parties arose. One was known as the Old Side Party, and it held that only young men from the universities of the Old World or from Harvard and Yale in New England should be accepted as ministers. According to those who held to this view, it would not do to make any attempt to supply the lack with men who had not been thus trained. The standard of education in the Presbyterian Church should by no means be lowered by any substitutions for the training of a full college course. On the other hand, there arose the New Side Party, which held that inasmuch as there were no colleges or seminaries in the Middle Colonies, pastors should establish schools in their parishes for the training of likely young men for the ministry. There was one man who caught the vision of the great possibilities of such a plan, and that man was William Tennent.

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<sup>1</sup> This article may be viewed as an addition to the valuable series contributed by the author to this *Journal* on the general subject of the history of the Presbytery of New Brunswick; see Vols. VI-X.—Ed.

He was born in Ireland in 1673. He was educated in Edinburgh University,<sup>9</sup> graduating July 11th, 1695. He took orders in the Church of Ireland; was ordained a deacon July, 1704,<sup>8</sup> and a priest September 22, 1706. He never had a parish, but some say he was for a time chaplain for a nobleman. On May 15, 1702, he married Catherine Kennedy, daughter of Gilbert Kennedy, an outstanding minister of the Church of Scotland.

Between 1716 and 1718<sup>4</sup> William Tennent, with his wife, four sons and a daughter, landed in Philadelphia, where he was received by a cousin on his wife's side, James Logan, a man of means, who was secretary of the Province of Pennsylvania. At the meeting of the Synod, September 17, 1718, his application to be received into the Presbyterian Church came up for action, seemingly having been in the hands of a committee before that. In this case the date of his arrival may have been in 1717. He expressed dissatisfaction with his experience in the Episcopal Church. He desired to unite with the Presbyterian Church, and he stated his reasons for changing his church relations. He was duly received, and his beliefs in the matter were put upon the records, and they are as follows:

*Inprimis.* Their government by Bishops, Arch-Bishops, Deacons, Arch-Deacons, Canons, Chapters, Chancellors, Vicars, wholly anti-scriptural.

2. Their discipline by Surrogates, and Chancellors in their Courts Ecclesiastic, without a foundation in the Word of God.

3. Their abuse of that supposed discipline by commutation.

4. A Diocesan Bishop cannot be founded *jure divino* upon those Epistles to Timothy or Titus, or anywhere else in the Word of God, and so is a mere human invention.

5. The usurped power of the Bishops at their yearly visitations, acting all of themselves, without consent of the brethren.

6. Plurality of benefices.

Lastly, the Churches conniving at the practice of Arminian doctrines inconsistent with the eternal purpose of God, and an

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<sup>9</sup>Briggs, *American Presbyterianism*, p. 186. Dr. Briggs secured from the registrars of the Old World universities the data in regard to many of the colonial ministers.

<sup>8</sup>The certificate of ordination as a deacon is in the Pennsylvania Historical Society.

<sup>4</sup>Alexander, p. 249, refers to a note by Tennent, giving 1718 as the date. If it were not for that note, the date of 1717 or 1716 would seem more likely to be the true one.

encouragement of vice. Besides I could not be satisfied with ceremonial way of worship. These have so affected my conscience, that I could no longer abide in a church where the same are practised.

Signed by WILLIAM TENNENT.<sup>5</sup>

William Tennent's first ministry in the Presbyterian Church in the American Colonies was within what is now Westchester Presbytery, in southeastern New York. He first settled in East Chatham, where he lived from November 22nd, 1718, to May 1st, 1720. At the latter date he accepted a call to Bedford, a church not far removed, where he remained until August, 1726, although in 1721 he paid a visit to Bensalem, in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, possibly with a view to settling. That he went there is evident from records, and he was present that year in the Synod, which always met in Philadelphia. With the exception of that year, he was not present in the Synod until he came to Neshaminy in 1727.<sup>6</sup>

Coming now to the second part of William Tennent's ministry in the Colonies, the first thing that meets us is that, for a man of fifty-eight years of age, it was an ambitious program that he launched at the outset at the Forks of the Neshaminy. The second thing that should be noted is that it is difficult to arrange the order of events with any degree of certainty. So busy was he in making history, that no attention was given to the recording of what he did. It was in the fall of 1726 that he turned his face southward to take up his work in this new field. It seems that he first found a home in Northampton Township, about midway between Warwick Church and Bensalem. Some authorities hold that his cousin, James Logan, gave him there fifty acres. Nathaniel Irwin, pastor of Warwick Church from 1774 to 1812, left some "Memories of the Presbyterian Church of Neshaminy,"<sup>7</sup> in which he says:

In the year 1725 (whether by contract or by Presbyterian settlement does not appear) Mr. Tennent undertook to preach stately to the people collected there every other Sabbath; for two years and a half he continued thus to officiate at Mr.

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<sup>5</sup> *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 49 f.

<sup>6</sup> *Baird's History of Bedford Church*.

<sup>7</sup> *Journal II*, 218; also copy by Ezra P. Carroll.

James Craven's about three miles and a half southeast from the place where the church now stands, using the barn in the summer and house in the winter. Mr. Craven was Low Dutch, from Long Island, and attached to the Dutch Church subject to the Classis of Holland. Having now had the church in his house for so long a time he became a zealous member of the Presbyterian Church and his descendants and connections have formed a small but responsible branch of the church ever since.

In 1727 the foundations of a house for public worship were laid a few poles distant from the place where the church now stands; so vigorous did this society appear, even in the cradle, that this first church was an elegant stone building, forty by fifty feet, fitted for galleries, and the front of hewn stone. It was finished so that divine worship began to be statelyly performed in the summer of 1728. . . . William Tennent at this time lived on a farm which had been given him by his friend, James Logan, about equidistant from Neshaminy and Bensalem; but as he was advanced in years and found the supplying of two churches fourteen miles distant from each other too much for his diminishing strength, he resigned the charge at Bensalem and devoted his entire attention to the favored child of his grey hairs. Suited to this place, his generous friend Logan, accorded him a new plantation, in lieu of the former (situated on the Old York Road in Warwick Township about a mile and a quarter southeast of the church).

"What about this new plantation?" In Princeton University Library\* there is a deed bearing the date of September 11, 1735, in which John White conveys to William Tennent, of Northampton Township, one hundred acres of land for one hundred forty pounds. Search was made for this deed in the records of the County Clerk at Doylestown, but the document had not been recorded. Turner traces this property all the

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\*This deed is on parchment and is written in a bold hand:

" White to Tennant September 11, 1735 "	}	" Release of Land In Bucks Co."
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"This indenture made the eleventh day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty-four between John White of the City of Philadelphia, merchant of the one part and the Reverend William Tennent of Northampton Township in Bucks Co. clerg of the other part."

Notice the spelling—"Tennant."

way back to the grant of William Penn,<sup>9</sup> and Mr. Ely, too,<sup>10</sup> has also examined the deeds for the same, and furthermore has made a map of the Tennent plantation, which was first published in the *Nassau Literary Magazine* of Princeton University, Vol. 58. Concerning this property several questions may be asked. Why is it that the Old York Road cuts off a small triangle on the northeast corner? Ezra P. Carroll<sup>11</sup> answers that question by calling attention to the fact that the Old York Road was not laid out until a number of years after this deed was given.

The William Tennent Parsonage stands on the west side of the Old York Road at the northern end of this property, immediately opposite this triangular section. Concerning Mr. Tennent's early residence in Neshaminy, Mr. Turner had the following to say in his address at the celebration of the Log College in 1889:

The precise spot at which Mr. Tennent resided and conducted his theological seminary the first eight years is unknown. September 11, 1735, he bought one hundred acres of land of John White, of Philadelphia. During the next ten years of his life he occupied these acres. . . . His residence was on this side of the York Road and the building in which the young men studied and recited was just opposite on the other side, only a few rods off. The schoolhouse was of logs, about eighteen by twenty feet in size, and perhaps two stories high. In it the students spent most of the day and lodged at night with their preceptor or with families in the vicinity.<sup>12</sup>

Authorities speak of the gift of Logan to Mr. Tennent, but no trace can be found in any of the records of Mr. Logan's name. The explanation of this may be that Mr. Logan gave Mr. Tennent the money for the purchase of one-half of the plantation.

Early in Mr. Tennent's activities about the Forks of the

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<sup>9</sup> Page 12, note.

<sup>10</sup> Mr. Ely has spent much time in following up the change of titles and his service has been most valuable. See map in Princeton University Library.

<sup>11</sup> Ezra P. Carroll, clerk of the session of Warwick Church, is deeply interested in this memorial service. His family has been connected with Warwick Church from the beginning of its history.

<sup>12</sup> Murphy, p. 508.



Neshaminy, the latter being a general term for all this region, he began to minister at Deep Run, twelve miles north, where there was no church organization but a settlement of Scotch-Irish. Here he came every other week for five years or so. When, in 1732, an organization was effected, it was called "Mr. Tennent's Upper Congregation," and here he continued to preach until 1738, when declining health forced him to accept an assistant in this work, Francis McHenry. In 1735 there was a complaint made in the Synod against Mr. Tennent's ministry in Neshaminy. Among the objections was one to the effect that he had not been duly installed. The Synod looked into the matter and the next year adopted the following: "That the reasons advanced by the dissatisfied part of the congregation of Neshaminy in their application in justification of their non-compliance with Synod's judgment in relation to the last year and their desire to be freed from Mr. Tennent as their pastor are utterly unsupported, being founded (as appears to us) partly upon ignorance and mistake and partly (as we fear) upon prejudice, it is therefore ordered that the Moderator recommend it to said people to lay aside such groundless dissatisfaction and return to their duty, which they have too long strayed from, otherwise Synod will be bound in duty to treat them as disorderly." "Approved nemine contradicente."<sup>13</sup>

At the meeting of Synod in 1738 there was a readjustment of the boundaries of the presbyteries, and opportunity came for Gilbert Tennent and his followers to present to Synod a proposition for a presbytery that would be largely composed of Log College members and those who sympathized with them, and would secure a larger field for home mission work. The Synod accordingly voted to erect the Presbytery of New Brunswick, named after the church of its leading member. The territory reached from Crosswicks on the south, up to Staten Island, with the Atlantic Ocean on the east and the Pocono Mountains on the west.<sup>14</sup> This was indeed a large

<sup>13</sup> *Records*, p. 133.

<sup>14</sup> *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 138.

"Maiden head and Hopewell" are now Lawrenceville and Pennington. "Turkey" is New Providence. "Rocksiticus" is Mendham.

field in which the young men of the Log College might have ample room to make a trial of their gifts. The territory as assigned that day is now covered in whole or in part by no less than eight presbyteries.<sup>15</sup> The Presbytery of New Brunswick was a Home Mission Presbytery on a large scale, more than a hundred years before the Presbyterian Church as a whole began to take an earnest hold of mission work.

But the joy of the Tennents and their friends was turned to sorrow at a later session of the same meeting of Synod when the Old Side Party, fearful lest the new presbytery would flood the Church with half-educated ministers, proposed a plan designed to put a check upon the licensure and ordination of Log College students. Provision was made for the appointment of a commission of Synod by whom all candidates for the ministry coming without college diplomas from the Old World or from Harvard or Yale must be examined as to their fitness, and then presented to the presbytery. The New Side Party strenuously opposed the proposition, but they were in the minority. The plan was adopted, and though it was somewhat modified the next year, it was still eminently distasteful to the Log College people. The adoption of that resolution was the cause of the Great Schism which came a few years later.

When the new presbytery met for organization in New Brunswick, August 8, 1738, they found awaiting them a Log College student, John Rowland, without a certificate, who asked to be taken under the care of presbytery as a candidate for the ministry. Presbytery accepted him, according to the record:

Signified to the Presby that Mr. Jno. Rowland desired to be received upon Tryal in Order to his being Licensed to preach the Gospel, the Presby. thereon entered upon a serious Consideration of the Act of last Synod appointing that Young men be first examined by a Commission of Synod and obtain a Testimony of yr. Approbation before they can be taken upon Tryal

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"Minisinks" was a general term for territory north of Water Gap. There is an island in the Delaware River by that name. Whitehead, in his history of East Jersey, has a map giving the Minisink trail leading from the Delaware to the sea shore. The Indians used it in coming down to the ocean every year for a supply of fish.

<sup>15</sup>New Brunswick, Monmouth, Elizabeth, New York, Newark, Morris and Orange, Newton, and Lehigh.

by any Presby. belonging to the same, and after much reasoning upon the Case the Presby. came to the unanimous Conclusion viz: That they were not in point of Conscience restrained by sd. Act from using the Liberty and Power which Presbies. have all along hitherto enjoyed, but that it was their Duty to take the said Mr. Rowland upon Tryal, for wch. Conclusion they conceive they have several weighty and sufficient Reasons."<sup>18</sup>

At a subsequent meeting of presbytery, held on September 7, 1738, John Rowland was licensed, and forthwith was assigned to "New Side Congregations" in Maidenhead (Lawrenceville) and Hopewell (Pennington). When Mr. Rowland appeared for admission to the Synod the next year, the door was shut against him. Thereupon began a controversy which continued until 1741, when matters were at a fever heat at the meeting of Synod. The Synod was nearly equally divided between the two sides. The Presbytery of New York had absented themselves, possibly not wishing to get into the controversy. The question was not brought before the Synod in an orderly manner, but such was the intense feeling of the members, that a test vote was called; and when the Presbytery of New Brunswick and their friends found that they were in the minority, although a few votes would have changed the result, they walked out of the Synod, without saying a word, and with them went a number from other presbyteries who sympathized with the New Side. Had Jonathan Dickinson been present, he could easily have prevented a break between the two parties, but there was no one to come forward as an intermediary, and so the schism was allowed to stand; and that at a time when a united front was most needed in the colonies. The Old Side took their stand against the efficiency of Mr. Tennent's seminary at Neshaminy as a school for the education of young men for the ministry, and they also were opposed to the revival which the Presbytery of New Brunswick endorsed heart and soul.

"But for the Presbytery of New Brunswick not all was to be of a sombre hue in this year 1739, for there was to visit America a representative of the Holy Club of Oxford, one of the three leaders of the Wesley progressive movement in

<sup>18</sup> "History of the Presbytery of New Brunswick," *Journal VI*, p. 230.

England, which was mightily stirring the hearts of the masses in that country. Rev. George Whitefield had been ordained in the Church of England, but as the fire had kindled in his heart he had found himself trammelled by the limitations of the customs and rules of his church, and for months he had preached the Word under the open sky, incredibly vast multitudes following him.”<sup>17</sup>

George Whitefield reached Philadelphia on his second visit to America in the fall of 1739. “Within a week the elder Tennent waited upon him to wish him God-speed and to gather inspiration for his own soul. It is easy to imagine the uplift this aged servant of God received from this famous evangelist, then only twenty-four years of age. It is probable that that interview changed the visitor’s plans, as he learned of the distressing spiritual destitution, the inroads of deism, the gross immorality, and the piteous calls from shepherdless flocks throughout the Middle Colonies. After that visit there was no question as to what was the supreme need of the hour in the judgment alike of Mr. Whitefield and of the Log College men.” According to Whitefield’s Journal:

“Thursday, Nov. 22, set out for Neshaminy (twenty miles from Trent Town), where old Mr. Tennent lives, and keeps an academy, and where I was to preach today, according to appointment. We came hither about twelve, and found about three thousand people gathered together in the meeting house yard, and Mr. William Tennent preaching to them, because we were beyond the appointed time. When I came up, he stopped, and sung a psalm, and then I began to speak. At first, the people seemed unaffected, but, in the midst of my discourse, the hearers began to be melted down, and cried much. After I had finished, Mr. Gilbert Tennent gave a word of exhortation. At the end of his discourse, we sung a psalm, and then dismissed the people with a blessing. After our exercises were over, we went to old Mr. Tennent, who entertained us like one of the ancient patriarchs. His wife seemed to me like Elizabeth and he like Zacharias; both, as far as I can find, walk in all the ordinances and commandments of the

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, p. 329 ff.

Lord blameless. We had sweet communion with each other, and spent the evening in concerting measures for promoting our Lord's kingdom. It happens very providentially that Mr. Tennent and his brethren are appointed to be a presbytery by the synod, so that they intend breeding up gracious youths, and sending them out into our Lord's vineyard. The place wherein the young men study is now, in contempt, called the College. It is a log-house, about twenty feet long, and nearly as many broad; and, to me, it seemed to resemble the school of the old prophets. From this despised place, seven or eight worthy ministers of Jesus have lately been sent forth; more are almost ready to be sent; and a foundation is now laying for the instruction of many others."<sup>17</sup>

"The effect of this visit upon the Presbytery of New Brunswick was simply overwhelming. Mr. Whitefield deemed no sacrifice too great to show his approval of the gigantic work the Tennents and their friends were struggling under. He preached in the chief towns of the Presbytery again and again. And he went to the out stations, too. No place seems to have been too remote or too insignificant. And great as was the benefit to the people, who were mightily quickened in spiritual things, still greater was the uplift and encouragement for the ministers of the Presbytery themselves, as they came into intimate contact and fellowship with this master of assemblies who was burning up with the desire to save every soul he could possibly reach with the gospel message. So the close of the year 1739 and the months following were times of glorious refreshing for the 'Brunswick Brethren.'"<sup>18</sup>

At the meeting of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, May 29, 1742, William Tennent, Sr., gave into the presbytery a paper "setting forth his inability, owing to his advanced age, to continue the work of the ministry and to the said congregation of Neshaminy over which he had for divers years past been an overseer, desiring the presbytery to grant to the congregation of Neshaminy such supplies as they can."<sup>19</sup> The presbytery took the matter under consideration. At the same

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, p. 329 ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, p. 329 ff.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, p. 223.

meeting Mr. Robinson was appointed to supply Neshaminy three Sabbaths and Mr. Treat as often as convenient before the next meeting of presbytery. Mr. Tennent was present at the meeting in New Brunswick, August 2, 1742, when Charles Beatty, a Log College student, offered himself to the presbytery in order to be examined as a candidate for the gospel ministry. The presbytery being well satisfied with respect to his moral conduct and gracious experience, tried his skill in the languages and natural philosophy, as also with respect to divinity, and, having received satisfaction, decided to give him the parts of trial. At the meeting of Presbytery, October 12, 1743, at Freehold, William Tennent, Sr., was present, and at this meeting Mr. Beatty was licensed and he accepted the call to Neshaminy Church. On December 14, 1743,<sup>20</sup> the presbytery met in Neshaminy Church, Mr. Tennent being present, when Mr. Beatty was ordained and installed the pastor of that church before a "numerous assembly." This was the last meeting of presbytery that Mr. Tennent attended. It was a matter of satisfaction to him, no doubt, that he was permitted to take part in the ordination and installation of one of his own students. It is said that when Mr. Beatty came to this country, although he had received a good education, he found that the only way open for him to earn a living was by peddling. It is said that one day he came to the Log College and surprised Mr. Tennent by offering his wares in Latin. At this Mr. Tennent declared that he must sell his pack and come back and join his school. This he did. And then, on December 12, 1744, he took the place of his master. It has been said that for a time he essayed to conduct the school, but of this there is little evidence. The Log College was nearing its end, as other schools had caught the inspiration: Faggs Mannor, Pequea, and West Nottingham, while over in New Jersey there was that master mind, Jonathan Dickinson, with his parish school, which was soon to be the College of New Jersey.

Meanwhile the controversy between the New and Old Sides was continued. The Old Side opposed the teaching of the Log

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, p. 224.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, p. 346.

College to the very last, and also the revival under Whitefield. As late as 1745 the Synod of Philadelphia, by a general act, sent a letter to President Clapp, of Yale, speaking in derogatory terms of Mr. Tennent, his school, and the work that they were doing.<sup>21</sup>

Mr. Tennent made his will on February 16, 1745 (possibly it was 1746, new style), and in this he appointed his son Gilbert executor of his real estate and Mrs. Tennent of his personal property. This will is on record in the Doylestown County Clerk's office, Will Book II. And beneath the will, under date of May 9, 1746, is the certificate of the executor and executrix, and the statement is made that "William Tennent, late of the County aforesaid, died on May 6, 1746." Turner, confused over the change of the calendar, in his history of the Neshaminy Church, holds that the date on the tombstone should have been 1745,<sup>22</sup> but in his address at the anniversary in 1889 he seems to have changed his mind, for he there gave the time of Mr. Tennent's death as May 6, 1746.

William Tennent was a poor man throughout life. Upon coming to this country he borrowed from the Synod's Fund, Mr. McNish being his security. He asked, in 1724, "some supply from the fund," in vain.<sup>23</sup> On one occasion the unpaid interest was remitted. His widow petitioned for the same favor. Eight pounds were thrown off upon condition that the principal and interest be paid in full. James Logan was ever on the lookout for the needs of Mr. Tennent and his family.

William Tennent did the work of three men. In the first place, he was an earnest evangelist, ever alert to minister to scattered settlements hungry for the Word. In the second place, he was a teacher of the first rank, combining with his instruction a spiritual influence that inspired his students with his own wonderful religious spirit. Had he been an ordinary teacher, the claims of the Old Side Party in their criticism of his school might have been partly true. They did not understand the man. President James A. Garfield was once asked

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<sup>21</sup> *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 186.

<sup>22</sup> *Neshaminy Church*, p. 65; cf. Murphy, p. 508.

<sup>23</sup> "Fund for Pious Uses," the root fund of all our organized beneficences;" *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 79, 134.

as to his idea of a college. He replied it was having President Mark Hopkins on one end of a log with a student hungry for the truth on the other. That was the sort of college that for eighteen years Mr. Tennent maintained at Neshaminy. During that time no less than eighteen young men came under the master's magic spell; and they went forth to win the Colonies for God. Probably no school of the same size ever turned out in the same time as many outstanding ministers as did this school of William Tennent. Great as was his service as a minister of the Word, and great as was his service in raising up preachers of the Word, greater still was the example that he set for others to copy. Mr. V. Lansing Collins, Secretary of Princeton University, happily sums up his service: "He convinced the Presbyterians of the Middle Colonies that they need not and ought not to wait upon Great Britain and New England for their educated ministers."

The first of Mr. Tennent's scholars to follow his example was Samuel Blair, who, in 1739, in connection with his church, set up an academy at Londonderry (now Faggs Manor), which he conducted until his death in 1751. During this time he sent forth a notable band of men who became leaders in the Presbyterian Church. There was John Rodgers, who was trained in his academy and afterwards instructed in theology by Gilbert Tennent. Rodgers was the moderator of the second General Assembly. As a boy, he on one occasion held a candle for George Whitefield as he preached in Philadelphia. So interested in the sermon did the lad become that he let the candle fall, much to his discomfiture. Years afterward, when he was a pastor in New York City, he asked Whitefield, who was preaching for him, whether he remembered the incident, and the great evangelist replied that he had thought of it a number of times and had wondered what had become of that earnest boy.\*

Samuel Davies was another of Mr. Blair's students who became one of the most finished preachers in the Colonies. With Gilbert Tennent he was sent to Great Britain to press the claims of the College of New Jersey. It is probable that Mr.

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\* Webster, p. 426; *Journal*, VIII, p. 343.



Davies was converted through the preaching of Gilbert Tennent. He was the fourth president of the College of New Jersey, from 1759 to 1761.<sup>25</sup> If Samuel Blair "had done no more than to win and train the talented Davies for the Christian ministry, he would have earned the grateful recognition of posterity."<sup>26</sup>

Then there was Robert Smith,<sup>27</sup> who was the moderator of the third General Assembly, and who, as pastor at Pequea, opened an academy on the Log College pattern, as he had seen it in Mr. Blair's school. In this academy Mr. Smith trained a goodly number of men who served well the cause of Christian education. Three sons of his were prepared to enter advanced classes in the College of New Jersey, and two of these sons became moderators of the General Assembly. Thus one family furnished three moderators of the General Assembly within ten years. And all three of them had received their start in education in a school of the type of William Tennent's Log College. Samuel Stanhope Smith, one of these sons, became the sixth president of the College of New Jersey.<sup>28</sup>

And the third of these academies was that of Samuel Finley,<sup>29</sup> another Log College student, who took a course of six years with Mr. Tennent and no doubt was assistant to him. In 1744 he came to West Nottingham and there opened an academy over which he presided for seventeen years, and in that time he, too, raised up a band of men who went forth as mighty defenders of the faith, and as patriots in those formative times; among them were Governor Martin, of North Carolina; Ebenezer Hazard, of Philadelphia; Benjamin Rush, M.D., and his brother, Judge Jacob Rush, both of Philadelphia; Dr. Alexander McWhorter, of Newark; Dr. William M. Tennent, of Abington, who became a moderator of the General Assembly, and Alexander Waddell, of Virginia. In addition to being a preacher, Dr. McWhorter was an ardent patriot. He joined Washington in his disastrous march across New Jersey in the fall of 1776, when to all intents the cause of the

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<sup>25</sup> Webster, p. 549; *Journal*, IX, p. 295.

<sup>26</sup> *Journal*, XII, 169.

<sup>27</sup> Webster, p. 612; *Journal*, VIII, p. 145.

<sup>28</sup> Sprague, III, p. 335.

<sup>29</sup> Webster, p. 499.

patriots was lost; but this did not deter Dr. McWhorter. He was with Washington in his councils of war prior to the battles of Trenton and Princeton, holding up the hands of the commander-in-chief.

Such were some of the men raised up in the Log College and the other institutions founded on the same simple plan. This country would indeed have been poorer intellectually and spiritually, if these private academies and seminaries had not done their work in the Middle Colonies for two decades and more. If there had been no Log College, there would have been no Londonderry School, no Pequea Academy, and no Nottingham Academy.

In making up a roll of the scholars of the Log College eighteen names in all have been listed; concerning some of these there are doubts. Mention has already been made of two of these, Samuel Blair and Samuel Finley, who in addition to their preaching conducted academies after the pattern of the Log College where they studied. At the very top of the Log College men is to be placed the name of Gilbert Tennent,<sup>80</sup> who received his education from his father before the Log College was opened. He was the first Presbyterian in the Colonies to receive ordination after completing his theological preparation in the Colonies. The leader of the "Brunswick Brethren" was ever zealous in holding up the honor of his father's school. He was a powerful preacher. When Whitefield wished to have some one follow up his ministry in New England, watering the seed that he had sown, the man whom he insisted upon to perform that service was Gilbert Tennent, who entered upon the task with zeal. Some said he was quite the equal of the English evangelist as a preacher. The statement has been made that through his preaching more people were brought into the Kingdom than by any other man in the Colonies, save Whitefield himself. He was the first pastor at New Brunswick, beginning in 1726. He was called away from that charge to Philadelphia, to follow up the ministry of Whitefield in that city, and in the Second Church, which was the result of the revival, services were held every day and three times on Sunday

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<sup>80</sup> Sprague, III, p. 35.

during the year after Whitefield's departure. Mr. Tennent settled down to the task assigned him by his brethren and made this ministry his one work during the remainder of his life. He died in 1764.

Then there was his brother William,<sup>21</sup> who was less aggressive but none the less a mighty force for righteousness. As a young man, through over study, he fell into a trance, while at his brother's in New Brunswick, as he was preparing for his trials in presbytery. He remained in the trance so long that his brother was sure that he was dead, but at last he came to and for months was as a child. All at once he came to himself again. He followed his brother John at Freehold, whose ministry was all too short, for he was a deeply spiritual preacher, and the influence of his work remained in Freehold, or Old Tennent as it is now, for years after his departure. William was the first preacher in what is now the Old Tennent Church, his brother having ministered at Old Scotts at Wickatunk, where he was buried. Then William had another trying experience when he was charged with perjury by the Chief Justice of the colony of New Jersey. Alexander has an interesting story as to the way he was freed, though the account, to all intents, rested upon tradition. That he was a great preacher is evidenced by the fact that students from the College of New Jersey used to walk the twenty miles in order to hear the pastor of Freehold in his own pulpit.

In the leaders of the Log College should be included John Blair,<sup>22</sup> the brother of Samuel. He followed his brother in the academy after the death of the latter. In 1767 he was chosen a professor of the College of New Jersey, and for a time acted as president before the coming of Dr. Witherspoon. It is worthy of note that in those days whenever there was any big position to be filled, the authorities often turned to these Log College men, half-educated as the Old Side claimed they were, instead of going to those who had their gilt-edged diplomas from Harvard, Yale, or some Old World University, tucked away in their rooms.

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<sup>21</sup> Sprague, III, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> Sprague, III, p. 117; Webster, p. 486.

Foremost among those who stood out as evangelists in the roll of the Log College men was John Rowland,<sup>33</sup> over whose licensure the Church split and remained apart for eighteen years; though it would be nearer the truth to say that the adoption of the resolution calling for a commission to examine candidates before giving them to the presbyteries, was the cause. Rowland was a forceful preacher. His enemies called him "Hell-fire Rowland." He was accused of stealing a horse through the error of Samuel Stockton in mistaking him for Tom Bell, a rogue. Bell, realizing that he resembled Rowland, went out to a church and introduced himself as Rowland, whereupon they asked him to preach for them on Sunday. When Sunday came, he announced, on the way to church, that he had forgotten his sermon. He was given the fastest horse to return for it. Then he rifled the house and departed for parts unknown. The story was that it was Mr. Rowland who robbed the house. The community was shocked. At the trial William Tennent and two elders testified that they had been with Rowland on an evangelistic tour miles away at the time the horse was stolen, and upon this testimony he was cleared; but some people believed he committed the robbery. Soon after he left the Presbytery of New Brunswick to take up his work at Deep Valley, Noriton, Upper Providence and Charlestown. He died at the latter place in 1746, and his body sleeps there in an unmarked grave.

James McCrea studied at Neshaminy.<sup>34</sup> He was taken on trial by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, October 4, 1739, and was licensed November 6th of the same year. "Immediately upon the licensure of Mr. McCrea, Presbytery assigned to him the supply of the five places that had at that meeting asked for preaching: 'Allens Town, Cranberry, Pepack, Lebanon, and Muskinicunk.' . . . What a circuit for a young man upon which to begin his ministry, and what hardships it necessitated, especially during the winter. Let the reader picture to himself how this novice possibly arranged it. Starting in at Allentown the latter part of the week, he visited the people on

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<sup>33</sup> Webster, p. 469.

<sup>34</sup> Webster, p. 433.

Saturday, and then on Sunday morning preached to them. After dinner, getting into his saddle, he would ride ten miles to Cranberry, where he would hold the evening service. On the next day he would call on the people, and on Tuesday set out for the long ride of fifty-five miles to Peapack, possibly breaking his journey to stay over night with Mr. Gilbert Tennent, to get a little inspiration from the great preacher, a bit of cheer from a veteran for the hardness of the way. Visiting the people the day before, he would preach at Peapack Thursday evening. The next day he would ride over to Lebanon to prepare for the service Sunday morning. And that afternoon he would ride ten miles over to Musconetcong Valley for the evening service. The first of the week, finding his way down the river on the forty-mile ride to Allentown, he would complete the circuit of one hundred and thirty miles, as the crow flies, but of about two hundred miles as he made the trip. Forests that seemed to have no end; streams and rivers, oftentimes at flood, that seldom, if ever, had any bridges; rain and sleet and snow, and the darkness of night overtaking him and making him lose the way, such were some of the difficulties besetting the new circuit rider in that winter of 1739 and '40.

“When there was need of thus loading up a young man like Mr. McCrea, and when it was necessary for the pastors to take at each meeting of the Presbytery appointments for supply in addition to their regular work, it was no wonder that the members of the Presbytery were sometimes at their wits' end in trying to meet the ever-increasing demands which were being made upon them as a result of the Great Awakening and the preaching of Mr. Whitefield.

“In their extremity they fell one day upon the scheme of sending a far-away call, through the clerk, to Mr. Edwards, at Northampton, giving him ‘a relation of the necessitous circumstances of divers places in this country in respect to the gospel ministry, in order to excite him to speak to some pious candidates there to come this way and help us [them] in the Lord's work.’ This is, in truth, a pathetic appeal coming from a body of men themselves burdened to the utmost.”<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *Journal*, VI, p. 335.

After supplying for a number of years, McCrea became pastor of Bedminster, Lamington as it is now called. He died October 21, 1766, and is buried at Lamington. He was the father of Jane McCrea, who was massacred by the Indians.

Charles Beatty was another of the foremost of the Log College men, the successor of Mr. Tennent. He was also a missionary to the Indians, preaching the first Protestant sermon on the site of Pittsburgh. He was the ecclesiastical diplomat of his day. Many of his descendents were very influential in the later history of the Church.<sup>22</sup>

Charles Tennent<sup>23</sup> joined the Presbytery of Newcastle and was for a long time pastor of the White Clay Creek Church. He spent his days apart from his brothers, and comparatively little is known about him as to his stand in the controversies of his time.

Charles McKnight was put on this roll on the strength of an article by Thomas Little,<sup>24</sup> in which he quotes a clause in the will of the father of McKnight to the effect that Charles was "a student of the Tennents," and that he was to receive certain money under the will for his education. He was taken under the care of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, June 23, 1741, and was ordained October 12, 1742. He ministered in many fields in New Jersey. For twenty years he was a trustee of Princeton. He was an ardent patriot and sent into the Continental Army from his parishes, one colonel, seven captains, and a large number of privates, and both of his sons. He was confined in a British prison ship and there endured hardships which hastened his departure. He died January 1, 1778. There is a memorial of him in Trinity Church Yard, New York City.

Besides those mentioned there were the following students of the Log College who made good use of their ministry: William Robinson, John Roan, William Dean, John Campbell, Dean Alexander, and Hamilton Bell. Doubtless there were

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<sup>22</sup> Murphy, *op. cit.*, p. 111 f.

<sup>23</sup> Webster, p. 446.

<sup>24</sup> "Biographies of Pastors and Stated Supplies of the Presbyterian Church of Shrewsbury, N. J.," by Thomas Little, Esq., in *Journal*, Vol. VIII, p. 58.

others who studied there for a shorter or longer time. As the years pass, some of these names may be added to this honor roll and perhaps at some future celebration their names may be entered in bronze on the memorial on the site of the Log College. As William Tennent drew on to the close, laying aside one after another of his many tasks, keeping to the very last his work in the Log College, the Synod of New York was considering the matter of the establishing of a permanent institution to take the place of the Log College and these private academies that had been raised up as pioneers in religious education. The Old Side had also set about the task, but were less successful than their New Side brethren, for at the outset they had heaped all sorts of scorn upon such undertakings.

The following is a list of these academies:<sup>a</sup>

William Tennent, Log College, Neshaminy.....	1728
Samuel Blair, Faggs Manor, Londonderry, Pa.....	1739
Samuel Finley, Academy at Nottingham, Md. (West Nottingham, Pa.) .....	1744
Robert Smith, Pequea, Pa.....	1750

And beside these there were academies over in New Jersey:

Jonathan Dickinson's Classical School, Elizabethtown <sup>b</sup> ..	1740
Aaron Burr's School, Newark <sup>c</sup> .....	1740

As early as 1739 Jonathan Dickinson, Aaron Burr, and Ebenezer Pemberton commenced considering what could be done for the establishment of a permanent institution for the training of young men for the ministry. Little by little William Tennent was giving up his work, although holding on to the very last to his teaching in the Log College. His institution had never been chartered, and no doubt there was little idea of carrying on the work there after Mr. Tennent finished his earthly labors. He died May 6, 1746, and a few months later, on October 10, 1746, a charter was secured for the College of New Jersey from John Hamilton, the president of the Provincial Assembly, who for a time had taken the place of Governor Morris. The latter had refused a charter, wishing to await the time when one might be issued under the Church of England's

<sup>a</sup> *Journal*, XII, p. 184.

<sup>b</sup> *Sprague*, III, p. 14.

<sup>c</sup> *Sprague*, III, p. 69.

auspices. In this charter of Hamilton's provision was made for twelve trustees. There were seven named in the charter: Jonathan Dickinson, John Pierson, Ebenezer Pemberton, and Aaron Burr, all members of the Synod of New York, and all graduates of Yale save Pemberton; and three laymen, William Smith, William P. Smith, and Peter VanBrugh Livingston. These seven were empowered to choose five others and accordingly the following were selected: Gilbert Tennent, of the Log College; William Tennent, of the Log College; Samuel Blair, of the Log College; Samuel Finley, of the Log College, and Richard Treat, pastor of the Abington Church, who was a graduate of Yale, and who had worked hand in hand with the elder Tennent. Jonathan Dickinson was chosen the first president. After his election he lived less than a year, dying October 7, 1747.

It was soon found that the charter was inadequate. Accordingly, when the new governor, Jonathan Belcher, came, application was made for a second charter, which was willingly granted September 14, 1748. And under this charter Princeton University has continued to this day.

From time to time there have been discussions as to the relation of the Log College to Princeton University. The matter was taken up in 1902 by Dr. Elijah R. Craven<sup>49</sup> who, in his usual thorough manner, investigated the various phases of the question. He summed up his findings as follows:

In conclusion, it seems to me to be proper to introduce a paragraph from the History of the Log College, by the venerable Archibald Alexander, D.D., than whom no man was more thoroughly acquainted with the early history of the Church which he so long and so faithfully served. The reference in the passage quoted is to the time of the establishment of the Synod of New York in 1745. Dr. Alexander writes (*Log College*, p. 125): "The Log College still existed, but it was manifestly on the decline. The venerable founder became infirm, so that he could not perform his pastoral duties; of course he was no longer capable of paying much attention to the school. In these circumstances, the necessity of another institution, of a higher character, became urgent. . . . Just as the Log College expired,

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<sup>49</sup> *Journal*, I, p. 308 ff. There was a celebration held on the site of the Log College on October 5, 1889, when President Benjamin Harrison gave an address, as did also other men distinguished in Church and State.



the College of New Jersey sprang into existence. The friends and patrons of the former became the principal supporters and trustees of the latter. Thus it may with truth be said, that the Log College was the germ from which proceeded the flourishing College of New Jersey."

All my investigations have led me to adopt the conclusion of Dr. Alexander. I recognize that the schools of Elizabeth Town and Newark, and also that the school at Faggs Manor, in which President Davies was educated, and that at Nottingham, established by President Finley, were absorbed in the college. They were rills that entered into the great river that now enriches the country and the world as Princeton University, but the head and main spring was the Log College of Neshaminy.

The following tablet was erected at the entrance of Nassau Hall in 1896:

**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**  
 1726 1746 1896  
**THE LOG COLLEGE**  
 OPENED 1726 AT NESHAMINY,  
 WAS DISCONTINUED IN 1746,  
 WHEN MEMBERS OF THE SYNODS  
 OF NEW YORK AND PHILADELPHIA  
 AND THE SUPPORTERS OF  
 THE LOG COLLEGE  
 UNITED IN THE ORGANIZATION OF  
 THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY  
 AT ELIZABETH TOWN.  
 FIRST CHARTER GRANTED OCT. 22, 1746  
 BY KING GEORGE THE SECOND  
 THROUGH JOHN HAMILTON,  
 ACTING GOVERNOR-IN-CHIEF  
 OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW JERSEY.  
 SECOND CHARTER GRANTED SEPT. 13, 1748  
 BY KING GEORGE THE SECOND  
 THROUGH JONATHAN BELCHER, M.A.,  
 GOVERNOR-IN-CHIEF  
 OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW JERSEY.  
 ON OCT. 22, 1896, THE NAME OF  
 THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY  
 WAS CHANGED TO  
**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY**  


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 DEI SUB NUMINE VIGET.

The address at the unveiling of this tablet was delivered by the Rev. John DeWitt, D.D., LL.D., and is published in the *Minutes of the Synod of New Jersey, 1902*, p. 111 f. See also the *Minutes* of this Synod for the year 1897, p. 99 f.

In connection with the celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of the Log College, a memorial has recently been set up, on the Old York Road, on the very site where stood that house of logs where William Tennent taught. And the tablet thereon, written in bronze, will tell to generations yet unborn the story of the vision of that pioneer in American Christian education, side by side with the roster of the institutions of this land that for their beginnings look back to this sacred spot.

The monument consists of three bronze tablets mounted on a granite stone. The middle panel bears at the top the Latin motto: *Lux In Tenebris*; below is a bas-relief of the Log College; and below that, the following memorial inscription:

HERE IN THE LIFE OF  
A PIONEER TEACHER  
SOUND LEARNING ENDUED  
WITH SPIRITUAL PASSION  
WROUGHT TO VITALIZE  
KNOWLEDGE, GLORIFY TRUTH,  
ENRICH LIFE, AND IN DUE  
TIME CALL FORTH, TO THE  
GLORY OF GOD AND THE  
WELFARE OF AMERICAN  
YOUTH, THESE MANY  
CHRISTIAN COLLEGES

The side panels name the Presbyterian colleges that have sprung from this humble beginning, with their dates in the order of their establishment, as follows:

1746 PRINCETON	1869 WILSON
1771 QUEENS	1872 ARKANSAS
1776 HAMPDEN-SIDNEY	1875 PARK
1787 WASHINGTON AND JEFFERSON	1875 PARSONS
1794 TUSCULUM	1875 SOUTHWESTERN
1812 HAMILTON	1880 SOUTH CAROLINA
1819 CENTRE	1881 COE

1819 MARYVILLE	1882 HASTINGS
1826 LAFAYETTE	1882 EMPORIA
1827 HANOVER	1833 HURON
1827 LINDENWOOD	1833 JAMESTOWN
1829 ILLINOIS	1834 GROVE CITY
1832 WABASH	1835 MACALESTER
1836 DAVIDSON	1836 ALMA
1842 CUMBERLAND	1837 OCCIDENTAL
1842 MARY BALDWIN	1839 DANIEL BAKER
1846 CARROLL	1839 AGNES SCOTT
1849 WESTMINSTER, Mo.	1890 WHITWORTH
1849 AUSTIN	1891 BUENA VISTA
1850 WAYNESBURG	1891 COLLEGE OF IDAHO
1852 DUBUQUE	1893 COLLEGE OF OZARKS
1853 WESTERN	1894 BELHAVEN
1854 LINCOLN UNIV.	1895 TULSA
1855 ELMIRA	1896 FLORA McDONALD
1857 BLACKBURN	1901 JAMES MILLIKIN
	1902 TEXAS PRESBYTERIAN

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