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Staten Island and Its People

A HISTORY

1609-1929

By
William

CHARLES W. LENG, B. Sc., 1859-

Director, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences; Local Historian for the Borough of Richmond; Research Associate, American Museum of Natural History; Contributor to Various Historic and Scientific Papers, Etc.

and

WILLIAM T. DAVIS

President, Staten Island Historical Society; Vice-President, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences; Author of "Days Afield on Staten Island," "Homestead Graves," "Staten Island Names, Ye Olde Names and Nicknames," "The Conference or Billopp House," Etc.

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second major; Harmanis Garrison, quarter-master; Nicholas Stilwell, adjutant. The above persons we return to you for approbation and commission. We have divided our county into four districts, and hope to return to you, in a short time, the names of the captains and subalterns. We are, gentlemen, respectfully, Your very humble servants, By order of the committee, Christian Jacobson, Chairman." (Journal of the Provincial Congress, Vol. II, p. 148. A further letter on the same subject written June 10, 1776, appears on p. 240 of the Journal.)

In the meantime there were fresh causes of complaint in part unjustified. Isaac Decker, Abraham Harris and Minne Burger were arrested at Elizabethtown on charges not specified. Decker and Burger were returned to Staten Island on February 28, while nothing is said of the disposition of Harris. Charges were also made against Richard Conner which were likewise transmitted to the committee of Richmond.

Hendric Garrison, of Richmond County, complained to Congress, in March 8, 1776, that while he was serving as a witness before the committee of the county, the committee permitted the defendants, Cornelias Martino, Richard Conner and John Burbank, to insult and abuse him. He asked the protection of Congress.

Lord Stirling, as commander of the Continental troops in New York, issued a warrant to apprehend John James Boyd, of Richmond County, and have him brought before the Congress. Captain John Warner, to whom the warrant was delivered for execution, laid it before that body on the 14th of March, when it was considered and decided that the said Boyd was so unimportant and insignificant a person as not to deserve the trouble and expense of apprehending him. Boyd resented this depreciation of his importance and, on the 21st, sent a note to the committee of safety claiming to be "a steady and warm friend of his country," and pronounced any accusation against him unfounded." (Bayles.)

Peter Poillon was arrested in May for supplying the King's ships with provisions. He pleaded ignorance of the regulations and was discharged with a caution.

On June 5, 1776, Congress issued an order for the "arrest of a number of persons in several counties who were inimical to the cause of America." Those from Richmond County were once more the above-mentioned Isaac Decker, Abram Harris, and Minne Burger; together with Ephm. Taylor. Congress also ordered that "several persons who held office under the king should be summoned to appear before the Congress," including Benjamin Seaman and Christopher Billopp. There is nothing to show that these orders were executed, but their issuance shows how Staten Island was regarded.

On April 1, 1776, Christian Jacobson, as chairman of the County Committee, reported the organization of four companies of militia on

Rev. Carmelo DiSano, in consideration of his patriotic sentiments and welfare work among his fellow countrymen, and especially for his enthusiastic Red Cross activities, has been honored by the title of Chevalier of the Crown of Italy, with letters of appreciation from the King and Queen.

Moravian Churches—It is said that Captain Nicholas Garrison, commanding a ship in which Bishop Spangenberg of the United Brethren, commonly called Moravians, was a passenger, became thereby the means of introducing the denomination on Staten Island. Rev. David Bruce was their first preacher here and Jacob Vanderbilt and wife among the first converts. Between 1742 and 1743, other Moravian clergymen began to come here, and services were held in a school house at or near Egbertville or New Dorp. On December 7, 1763, the old Moravian Church, combined with a parsonage, which is still standing but moved from the original site, was consecrated. Its cornerstone had been laid July 7, 1763, following an application to the church authorities in Bethlehem, Pa., made by Richard Conner, Stephen Martino, Jr., Tunis Egbert, Jacob Vanderbilt, Aaron Cortelyou, Matthias Enyard, John Beatty, Cornelius Cortelyou, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Cornelius Van Deventer, Stephen Martino, Mary Stillwell, Cornelius Martino, and Peter Perine.

From this beginning have sprung the various Moravian churches and the Moravian cemetery which have long been among the interesting features of Staten Island. The parent church was replaced by the present edifice, consecrated May 15, 1845. It had been damaged by fire, but not destroyed, during the Revolution, and had been served by the following pastors:

Rev. Hector Gambold, April 17, 1763-84.

Rev. James Birkby.

Rev. E. Thorp.

Rev. Frederick Moehring, 1787-93.

Rev. James Birkby, 1793-97.

Rev. Frederick Moehring, 1797-1803.

Rev. Nathaniel Brown, 1803-13.

Rev. John C. Bechler, 1813-17.

Rev. George A. Hartman, 1817-37.

Rev. Ambrose Rondthaler, 1837-39.

Rev. H. G. Clauder, 1839-52.

Since the new church was erected the following:

Rev. Bernhard de Schweinitz, 1852-54.

Rev. Amadeus A. Reinke, 1854-60.

Rev. Edwin T. Senseman, 1860-62.

Rev. Eugene Leibert, 1862-67.