

A
HISTORY
OF THE
Presbyterian Church in America,

FROM ITS ORIGIN UNTIL THE YEAR 1760.

WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF ITS EARLY MINISTERS.

BY THE
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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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WILLIAM DEAN

WAS probably educated at the Log College. The first notice of him is on the records of New Brunswick Presbytery, Aug. 3, 1741, when he was taken on trials. He was licensed, Oct. 12, 1742, and was sent to Neshaminy and the Forks of Delaware. The Lehigh was formerly called the West Branch of the Delaware, and the territory bounded by the two rivers and the Kittatinny Hills was long known as the Forks. It was inhabited by the Lenni Lenape, or the Delawares, and probably by other tribes: their cabins and cultivated patches did not deter the Proprietors from putting up large tracts of it as prizes in a lottery, besides conveying thousands of acres to William Allen, of Philadelphia. Two settlements were made in 1735 or '36, the one on the West Branch being called Craig's, and the one on the North Branch, Hunter's Settlement. The people were from Ulster; and at the second meeting of New Brunswick Presbytery, they presented their case, and Gilbert Tennent was directed to go to them in the fall. Campbell and Robinson were soon after sent, and, May 26, 1743, the Forks presented a call to Dean. He declined it, and was appointed to supply there and at Cape May; at the same time, at the request of Newcastle Presbytery, he was sent to the Forks of Brandywine and Pequea.

In the fall he was sent to Greenwich, in West Jersey, and, in Oct. 1744, to Cohanzy and the Forks of Delaware.

In the next year he went with Byram, of Mendham, into Augusta county, Virginia: a great awakening attended their labours, and continued till 1751. He was ordained, before May, 1746, pastor of the Forks of Brandywine: three acres were conveyed to him for the use of his congregation, and a meeting-house erected. In May, 1747, a call was sent for him to the synod from Timber Ridge and the Forks of James River: the presbytery were directed to meet and consider whether it should be put in his hands.

He died, July 9, 1748,* aged twenty-nine, and lies in the graveyard at Brandywine Manor. Davies† confirms the testimony recorded on his tomb, that he was an active, zealous, faithful minister: he laments his early death, and speaks of him and Robinson as our most useful ministers.

* Dr. J. N. C. Grier's Historical Discourse at Forks of Brandywine.

† Davies to Bellamy.