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THE PIONEER PRESBYTERIANS OF NEW PROVIDENCE, VA.

PART II.*

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Borden was a shrewd but popular proprietor; and the allotments, mostly the choicest glens among the mountains, were quickly absorbed by enterprising colonists, and there we find, among the families that clustered about the foothills, those of Alexander, Anderson, Berry, Coulston, Cowden, Campbell, Eakins, Fulton, Hayes, Henry, Hoover, Gray, Jamison, Kelly, Kennedy, McNutt, McDowell, Montgomery, Patton, Lowry, Robinson, Rhea, Stahlnecker, Stewart, Stephenson, Todd, Thompson, Walker, Wilson—and they formed a very considerable community at New Providence. The upper end of the Valley, where they were, was from ten to thirty miles wide, slightly undulating and underlaid with limestone, watered by copious streams from the mountain's side; while the coves and glens furnished excellent grazing ground for the cattle; altogether a fair and bountiful region. They built a stockade fort and the next work they did after building their cabins was to erect a log meeting-house where worship was periodically held with supplies sent from Pennsylvania.¹

* For Part I, see the preceding (March, 1922) issue of the JOURNAL, pp. 178-186.

¹ Foote, *Sketches of Virginia*, Series II, p. 58.

EARLY ELDERS OF MANOKIN CHURCH

BY HARRY PRINGLE FORD

The earliest known reference to what is now the Manokin Presbyterian Church, Princess Anne, Maryland, is found in the action of the Grand Jury presented at a Court held for Somerset county on the 12th day of March, 1671-2, in which it is stated as the opinion of the Grand Jurors "that sermon should be taught in four several places in the county . . . one on the third Sunday at the house of Christopher Nutter, in Manokin . . . and it is our desire that Mr. Matix should there preach." Dr. John S. Howk says: "We have good grounds for claiming Robert Maddux as a Presbyterian."

Dr. Alfred Nevin, in his History of the Presbytery of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Central, claims that the Presbyterians had a meeting house at Manokin as early as 1680. This may or may not have been "the house of Christopher Nutter." Sheriff Whittingham, of Somerset County, states in his report made in 1697, seventeen years later, that "there are three dissenting meeting-houses in Somerset . . . one at Manokin, about thirty feet long." Thomas Wilson, according to old records, was pastor at Manokin from 1686 to 1698.

Francis Makemie, who is known as the Father of Organized Presbyterianism in America, came to Somerset county in 1683; and, probably, shortly afterwards organized the Manokin preaching station into a church. The earliest mention of the Manokin congregation in the official records of Presbytery (organized in Philadelphia in 1706, of which Francis Makemie was moderator) is in the minutes of Presbytery held May 22nd, 1708, at which time it was ordered "That Mr. Taylor write to the people of Manokin and Wicomico, exciting them to their duty to pay what they promised to Mr. McNish." Rev. George McNish came to America in 1705; and at a Court held at Dividing Creek, Somerset County, June 12th, 1706, received permission to preach, among other places, at "the meeting-house at the head of Monocan." After preaching there for

some time, he received, in 1709, a call to become the pastor. He declined, and went to Jamaica, L. I., where he died March 10th, 1722. He was one of the most influential ministers of his day.

The chief object, however, of this paper is to call attention to the earliest known list of the elders of the church. The oldest recorded minutes now in existence of the Manokin Church, are dated July 20th, 1747. At a meeting of the session of the church held April 25th, 1748, the following members were present: Rev. John Hambleton (1746-1755) pastor; and elders John Gray, David Wilson, Thomas Brown, Henry Waggamon, Thomas Jones and Thomas Pollitt. Doubtless there were also other elders of the church, who were not present at this meeting, as the names of Nehemiah King, Colonel Robert King, Ephraim Wilson, John Baird, George Irving and William Skirven appear in the sessional records immediately following.

It is gratifying to be able now to present an earlier list of elders than the above. In a letter recently received from Harry C. Dashiell, Esq., of Princess Anne, he calls attention to the first conveyance of land to the Manokin congregation. This deed, dated in 1723, twenty-five years before the church record referred to above, is from Charles Ballard to the Rev. William Stewart (pastor from 1719 to 1734), and to the following elders of Manokin Church: John Tunstall, Robert King, John Gray, Robert Wilson, Mark Smith, Richard Wallace, William Alexander and James Strawbridge. The deed is for a quarter of an acre of land on the north side of the Manokin River, a part of "Nutter's Purchase," formerly owned by Christopher Nutter, and is the place where the present church (erected in 1765) now stands.

On January 24th, 1749, the session "Took action on three small legacies left to the use of the Manokin congregation: one of fourteen pounds, from Robert Wilson, deceased; one of ten pounds, from John Gray, deceased; and one of seventeen pounds, from John Tunstall, deceased." Evidently these were three of the eight elders whose names appear on the deed of 1723.