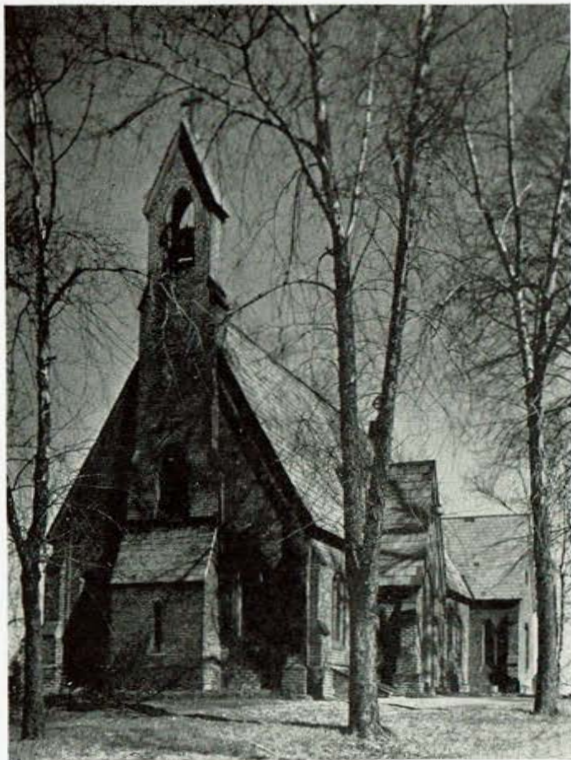


A HISTORY OF
TRINITY CHURCH, WOODBRIDGE

By the same author;
"Ardincaple Castle and its Lairds"
Glasgow, 1930 : Jackson, Wylie & Co.



Trinity Church: The Exterior of the Present (Third) Church Building
from a photograph taken by W. W. Klenke in 1933

A HISTORY of TRINITY CHURCH

WOODBIDGE, NEW JERSEY

from
1698 to 1935

by
The Reverend
EDWARD RANDOLPH WELLES

S. T. B., M. A. (Oxon.)

THE PINE TREE PRESS
Southborough
1935

One hundred copies of this book have
been printed of which this is
Number ~~100~~ 84

TO MY
WIFE

PREFACE

The most obvious contribution which this work makes to the History of the Parish and Diocese is that it has shown conclusively that services of the Church of England were held in Woodbridge five (or possibly only four) years earlier than the visit of the Reverend George Keith on December 29th, 1703, which had been generally believed to be the date of the first service. This History shows that the first service in Woodbridge was held not later than 1699, and most probably was held early in the year 1698, by the Reverend Edward Portlock. It is further urged that the available evidence indicates that services of the Church were probably conducted in Woodbridge earlier than in any other town in New Jersey with the exception of Perth Amboy.

This History, by showing that Presbyterian services were not held in Woodbridge until 1710 (in spite of the claim of the local Presbyterian Church to date back to 1675), gives the Church good grounds for claiming that the services of our Church were begun earlier than those of any other religious body now in Woodbridge.

What seems even more interesting, perhaps, is the picture which this book paints of a Parish which throughout its entire 237 years has always had to struggle hard for bare existence, and more often than not has seemed to be on the verge of total extinction.

A copy of this History was presented as a Thesis to the Dean and Faculty of the General Theological Seminary in New York with the result that the degree of S. T. B. was conferred upon the author.

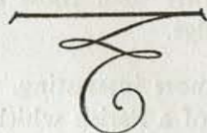
Thanks are due the following for their suggestions and helpful assistance: Prof. John H. Love, E. C. Ullman, Esq., and Miss Jane Lodge, of Woodbridge; the Rev. Dr. W. Northey Jones, Mr. Charles K. Seaman, Jr., and Mr. William Smith, of Perth Amboy; the late Reverend Hamilton Schuyler, Litt. D., of Trenton, the Rev. Walter H. Stowe, of New Brunswick, and the Right Reverend Paul Matthews, D. D.,

S. T. D., of Princeton; and the Librarians and officials of the following Libraries, Societies, and Houses: the Barron Library of Woodbridge, the New York Public Library, the Free Public Library of Trenton, the Princeton University Library, the Rutgers University Library, the New Brunswick Public Library, the Library of the General Theological Seminary, the Congressional Library in Washington, the New York Historical Society, the New Jersey Diocesan House at Trenton, and the Church Missions House in New York.

Most of all I want to acknowledge the great debt I owe my wife for copying out much of the material for this History, and for her constant encouragement.

E. R. W.

St. Mark's School
Southborough, Massachusetts
January 1935



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- 2—George Keith 1703
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- 4—John Sharp 1704
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(John Talbot 1707-1709)
- 5—Edward Vaughan (1709-1711) 1711-1722
- 6—Thomas Halliday 1717-1718
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- 9—Robert McKean, M. A. 1763-1767
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- 11—Abraham Beach, D. D. 1769, 1778-1784
(John Hamilton Rowland 1784-1787)
(George Hartwell Spieren 1788-1790)
(Henry Van Dyke, D. D. 1791-1795)
(Richard Channing Moore, D. D. 1793-1803) (later became Bishop of Virginia)
- 12—Uzal Ogden, D. D. Elected Bishop of New Jersey; never consecrated. 1797-1804
- 13—Jasper David Jones 1804-1809
- 14—James Chapman 1809-1825, 1829
- 15—John Croes, D. D. First Bishop of New Jersey. 1809-1810; 1817-1823, 1825, 1828, et cetera.
- 16—John C. Rudd, D. D. 1809-1810, 1814-1819
- 17—Daniel Higbee* 1812-1814
- 18—Lewis P. Bayard 1813
- 19—George Y. Morehouse 1815-1816
- 20—Samuel C. Stratton* 1817-1818
- 21—Francis H. Cuming 1818-1819
- 22—Clarkson Dunn* 1819-1824, 1826-1829
- 23—John M. Ward* 1822, 1824-1825
- 24—Robert B. Croes* 1823
- 25—John Croes, Junior 1810, 1824-1825
- 26—Charles Smith* 1825
- 27—Benjamin Holmes* 1825-1827
- 28—William Douglas 1829-1838
(Alfred E. Ford, Assistant 1836)
- 29—Frederick Ogilby 1838-1842
- 30—Hamble James Leacock 1842-1843
- 31—James Chapman 1843-1857
- 32—Henry N. Pierce 1857
- 33—William R. Earle 1857-1861
- 34—Eugene Augustus Hoffman, D. D., D. C. L., L. L. D. 1858-1862
(John Martin Henderson, Assistant 1858-1861)
(Ephraim de Puy, Assistant 1861-1862)
- 35—Peter L. Jaques 1862-1869
- 36—Robert C. McIlwain 1869-1871
- 37—J. A. Penniman 1871-1872

* Indicates that the clergyman was a "Missionary to the Vacant Churches in the Diocese".

- 38—T. Lewis Bannister 1872-1875
- 39—Julian Edward Ingle 1875-1879
- 40—Frank Hallam 1879-1880
(Thomas H. Gordon—Supply 1880)
- 41—Howard E. Thompson 1880-1884
- 42—Lewis H. Lighthipe, M. A. 1885-1895
(N. D. Van Syckel—Supply 1896)
(Charles Theodore Seibt—Supply 1896)
(John Acworth—Supply 1896)
(Allan Hawkesworth—Supply 1896)
- 43—Rudolph E. Brestell, D. D. 1896-1899
- 44—Scott B. Rathbun 1899-1913
(J. A. Springstead, B. A. 1911-1913)
(R. B. Shepherd, M. A., Archdeacon of New Jersey 1912-1913)
- 45—Henry Hale Gifford, B. D., Ph. D. 1914-1917
(Frank Dean Gifford, M. A., B. D. 1913-1916)
- 46—Reginald Harwood Thomas 1918
- 47—Walter Herbert Stowe, B. D. 1919-1921
- 48—Edward Harold Vogt 1921-1923
- 49—J. Benjamin Myers, B. A., LL. B. 1923-1931
- 50—Edward Randolph Welles, S. T. B., M. A. 1931-1934
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PART I
FROM THE FIRST SERVICES
TO THE CLOSE OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY WAR
1698 to 1783

CHAPTER I

The Settlement of Woodbridge

The first permanent settlement in the northern part of what is now known as the State of New Jersey was made in August 1660 on the West side of the Hudson River¹. This settlement was named Bergen. Four years later the Dutch were conquered by the English under the Duke of York and Albany (later King James II) and he conveyed the country between the Hudson and the Delaware to Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret². The new grant was named New Jersey (Novo Caesarea) from the seat of Sir George Carteret on the Island of Jersey.

A month after the conquest of New Amsterdam in 1664, the newly appointed Governor, Philip Carteret, a relative of Sir George, granted a petition to settle a plantation in New Jersey³. A tract of land between the Raritan and Passaic Rivers, extending back 34 miles was bought from the native Indians⁴. The land upon which Woodbridge was soon to be built was included in the purchase.

The settlers were not slow to begin taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the two proprietors and their Governor. When the latter arrived in New York on July 29, 1665, and proceeded to take possession of the new Province, he found a second settlement awaiting him at Elizabeth Town — which he made his Capital⁵.

The success of the settlers of Elizabeth Town encouraged others to follow their example. On May 21, 1666 we find Daniel Pierce and eight associates, all of whom resided in Newbury, Massachusetts, entering into an agreement with Governor Carteret to settle two townships⁶. The area specified was that lying between the Raritan and the Rawack (Rahway) Rivers and extending back some miles into the country. For £80 half of this land was transferred to Pierce on December 11th, 1666, and a week later he in turn transferred a quarter of the tract he had thus obtained to four others. On December 3rd, 1667⁷ Pierce was appointed to lay out the bounds of a town to be known as Woodbridge (in honour of the Reverend John Woodbridge of Newbury, Massachusetts, who was one of the first settlers⁸). Finally on June 11th, 1669 Pierce and his eight associates received a formal Town Charter, and Woodbridge came to share with Bergen and Elizabeth Town the honour of being one of the three earliest settlements in northern New Jersey.

¹A History of Middlesex County (3 Vols.) Wall and Pickersgill, New York, 1921. p. 10.
²Ibid. p. 11. ³Ibid. p. 14. ⁴Ibid. p. 15. ⁵Ibid. p. 15. ⁶Ibid. p. 19.
⁷Ibid. p. 19. ⁸Ibid. p. 401.

In this Charter of 1669 the following appears:

4. That they have power by the Pluralitie of voices of the Freeholders and Freeman of the said Corporation to Chuse their own Minister or Ministers for the Service of God in the administering of His Holy Sacrament and being so chosen Inducted and Admitted All persons as well the Freeholders as others the Freeman and Inhabitants Admitted into said Corporation or Township shall contribute according to their Estate for his maintenance towards which Church there shall be Two Hundred Acres of good Upland and Meadow laid out to the Use and Behooff of the said Minister and One Hundred Acres more for the maintenance of a Free School which said land shall not be alienated but shall remaine from one Incumbent to another forever which said Land together with The Land for the Building of a Church, Church yard School Hows Market Place and the Like shall be Exempt from Paying to The Lords Rent of halfe penny per Acre or any other rate of taxes whatsoever forever Notwithstanding it shall and may be Lawfull for any of the said Freeholders and Inhabitants aforesaid that are of a different Judgment in matters of Religion to Maintaine any other Minister or Ministers at their own Cost and Charges without being molested or Disturbed for the same."

From the reference to the "Service of God in the administering of his Holy Sacrament" it would appear that His Majesty's Government had in mind the Church of England, and not any of the forms of Independency brought by settlers from New England — where the term "Holy Sacrament" was not in use. But we are not surprised to find the Church of England slow to reach Woodbridge, for even if missionaries had been available at the early date of 1669, it is doubtful whether they would have been welcomed by the New England bred inhabitants of the town. Nevertheless, when a Church of England missionary's zeal created the need of a Church in Woodbridge, the edifice was constructed (1713) on a portion of the two hundred acres which had been "laid out to the Use and Behooff of the said Minister."

Most of Woodbridge's first inhabitants came from New England and were descended from the Puritans¹. The affairs of the town were conducted in the New England manner at town meetings. "The early residents deemed it necessary to prepare against Indian attacks, and a rate was levied to provide ten pounds of powder and twenty pounds of lead; the prison was ordered to be fortified by stockades of a half or a whole tree of nine feet long at least, to provide a place of safety for the women and children, but it was never occupied. A ranger of the woods was appointed to prevent danger threatened by the French and Indians²."

In 1670 Jonathan Dunham erected the first grist mill ever built in this part of the country, along the river, not more than two or three hundred yards away from the spot on which Trinity Church was later built. Jonathan received a subsidy of £ 30 from the town and all the meadow-sod he needed for building a dam. Tradition credits him with producing beautiful meal. The mill he built stood for several generations, and

some of the old timbers still marked its site in 1873¹. Jonathan's house was not far from the mill. When it was built it was the finest house in all Woodbridge. Dally writes in 1873: "It was standing two years ago, and looked so weird and strange that some were glad to see the builders reconstructing it, while others were sad when they saw the landmark disappear. It was originally constructed of brick, said to have been brought from Holland by vessels sailing hither and used as ballast on the voyage²." The old residence of the great miller of Woodbridge became the Rectory of Trinity Church in 1872 at which time it was reconstructed and considerably enlarged. One of the ancient mill-stones used by Jonathan in his mill remains to this day and is used as a door-step at the back-porch of the Rectory.

About the year 1675 the Independent Meeting House was begun on the Green³; the first church building to be constructed in the township. Until the building was finished, services were held in a small house near or upon the Green⁴.

By 1682 the population of Woodbridge was estimated at 600. A Court House and Prison were there and one of the two earliest Courts in New Jersey met there regularly. The early possession of a charter gave to the town a prominent position in the whole province⁵.

When Woodbridge was two decades old, the town of Perth Amboy came into being (1684-1685). One of those who played an important part in the early history of the latter settlement was George Keith, who held the appointment of surveyor⁶. A resolution was passed on April 9, 1685 bestowing 500 acres upon him and also stipulating that a town lot should be laid out to him by the Governor. It was further agreed that he should be given the use of one of the proprietor's houses, namely "that wherein Thomas Warne now inhabits⁷." Keith spent many months surveying Perth Amboy and the vicinity. Thus we may be sure that he was already well acquainted with Woodbridge when he preached there as a Church of England missionary in 1702-1703, since it is but three miles distant from Perth Amboy.

¹Hist. of Middlesex Co. 1921, p. 20. ²Ibid. p. 21.

¹"Woodbridge and Vicinity" by the Rev. Joseph W. Dally, New Brunswick, N. J. A. E. Gordon, 1873, pp. 19-20. ²Ibid. pp. 19-20. ³"Historical Sermon" preached by the Rev. L. V. Buschmann on the 250th Anniversary in 1925. ⁴Dally, Hist. of Woodbridge, p. 20. ⁵Hist. of Middlesex Co. 1921, p. 20. ⁶Ibid. p. 30. ⁷Ibid. p. 31.

CHAPTER II

Edward Portlock, George Keith, John Talbot and John Sharp

Contrary to the prevailing assumption, the first service of the Church in Woodbridge was not that which was held by George Keith on Wednesday, December 29th, 1703. The first service of our Church to be held in Woodbridge was conducted by the Reverend Edward Portlock (or Perthuck)¹ sometime after February 22nd, 1698 and (at the latest) sometime before the close of 1699.

We know of this event from a "History of the Church at Burlington, New Jersey" by Jeremiah Bass, Esquire, (who was Queen Anne's Governor² of the Province of New Jersey) written about the year 1714. The following extract is of great interest in regard to the first services at Woodbridge:

—"yet we cannot properly begin any History of the Church (i. e. the Church of England in the Province of New Jersey) but from the arrival of the Reverend Mr. Edward Portlock, who at the desire of several of the Proprietors of the Eastern division of this Province, came over, ordained by the Right Reverend Henry, Lord Bishop of London, to take the care and cure of souls as Rector of a Church, to be built at Perth Amboy, the metropolis of the Eastern Division of this Province, who arrived in this Province and made his application to the Governor, for the Proprietor, in the year—(1698 is the date given by Dr. W. Northey Jones, page 21 of his History of St. Peter's Church, Perth Amboy. Dr. Jones has viewed the original paper in the archives of the Bishop of London in Fulham Palace.), who with the consent and approbation of the agents, for the Proprietors, called the Council of Proprietors, set apart one of the Houses (that had formerly been built at the charge of the general Proprietors) for the peculiar service and worship of God, according to the laws of England, which House, by the contribution of several pious and well-disposed persons, was soon covered, and glazed, and fitted with seats and a Pulpit, and Mr. Portlock put into possession of the same; in the interim, Mr. Portlock preached sometimes at the Governor's House, sometimes at a house belonging to Mr. Dockaray of London, merchant, sometimes in the neighboring Towns of Woodbridge, Piscataway, and Elizabeth Town, and when the Governor's business called him into the Western Division, accompanied him to Burlington, where the Public Town House was allotted him for that service³."

It will be noticed that Woodbridge is the first of the towns to be mentioned—and the word "sometimes" leads us to suppose that he conducted more than one such service at Woodbridge and the other places mentioned. Burlington was visited

only "when the Governor's business called him into the Western Division" of the Province. As to the date of the services held in Woodbridge, it is evident from the above extract that these occurred quite soon after his arrival at Perth Amboy, because it is clearly stated that he preached there "in the interim" while the Church in Perth Amboy¹ was being made ready for services. Mr. Portlock's arrival was before February 22nd, 1698 for on that day he preached at Perth Amboy². It is probable, therefore, that he conducted the first service at Woodbridge sometime before the end of the year 1698; certainly before we find him ministering in Philadelphia late in 1699. The following letter sheds light upon the date of his removal from Perth Amboy to Philadelphia:

"May it Please Your Excellency.

When I came hither, I found our poor church destitute of a Minister by ye death of Mr. Wallbank but God Almighty who never fails or forsakes those yt trust in him hath by his Providence supplied or wants: for we have ingaged Mr. Portlock ye gentleman yt was in East Jersey. He found no incouragement to continue longer among you, and therefore is pleased to settle amongst us.

He is a great scholar, a very eminent preacher and a man of good life.

Philadelphia
ye 29 Ober 1699.

Your excellency
Most Obedient and Humble Servant
Robert Quary."³

After the Reverend Mr. Portlock departed from the Province of New Jersey, we have no record of any services at Woodbridge until the coming of the Reverend George Keith in 1703. It is an interesting fact, however, that the tradition of Trinity Church in Woodbridge has always maintained that the Church was founded in the year 1702. There is no known evidence for this belief, but the handsome bronze tablet beside the front door of the present Church states that the Church was "founded in 1702" and the "first service held by John (sic) Keith, December 29, 1703."

In 1702 the Reverend George Keith⁴ was sent out from England to the British Colonies in North America by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts⁵ (commonly referred to as the S. P. G.). This was one of the first acts of the newly organized Church of England missionary society (founded in 1701). Mr. Keith's task was to make a personal examination of the religious situation in the Colonies, with special reference to the need for missionaries of the Church of England which might be supplied by the Society. His appointment as the first missionary of the Society in North

¹Jones, "Hist. of St. Peters" p. 22.

²He became the first Rector at Perth Amboy.

³Jones, Hist. of St. Peters, p. 23; also Fulham MSS, Congressional Library.

⁴"He had been born at Aberdeen, Scotland, not of Quaker parents, but later became affiliated to them (i. e. Quakers). We hear of him in this country first in 1682 as a surveyor general in East Jersey, then a Quaker. Moved to Philadelphia in 1689 to become tutor to children of wealthy families. In 1691 began his dispute with the Quakers, and in 1694 he left for England and there was admitted to Holy Orders in the established Church. In 1702 he sailed for America." Coll. of P. E. Hist. Soc. 1851, p. ix.

⁵Coll. of P. E. Hist. Soc. 1851, p. ix.

¹So James Parker in his "Historical Sketches of Parishes Represented in the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Churches in New Jersey, 1785-1816" 1889, p. 114.

²At the time he wrote the History he was "her Majesty's Secretary of the Province of New Jersey under Governor Nicholson.

³"Collection of the Protestant Episcopal Historical Society, 1851, New York, p. 68.

America is generally believed to have been the result of a letter which he wrote giving data about each of the Colonies with which he was acquainted and their needs of Church of England ministrations: — "In East Jersey I have several friends that came off with me in the Separation from the Quakers, and so continue, and as I have been informed by a worthy gentleman, Col. Morris, formerly my scholar, who has a family and a good estate in that Province, and is now in London, (being lately come from East Jersey, who knows my friends there) they are well prepared to receive a Church of England Minister among them, and it is not to be doubted but he would have several other persons to joyn with him to set up a Church Congregation; the fittest places to set up a Church Congregation are Amboy and the Falls in Shrewsbury, near where Colonel Morris has his house and estate, for though Amboy has few Inhabitants, yet People would come to it from Woodbridge, and other places thereabouts." Thus we see from the last sentence that even before he came to America on his mission he clearly had Woodbridge in mind as a place to be taken into consideration.

During his trip to America, Mr. Keith made the acquaintance of the Reverend John Talbot, M. A., a Ship's Chaplain. The former persuaded the latter to accompany him on the tour of investigation.

On four different occasions² before December 29, 1703, the Reverend George Keith visited Perth Amboy and the vicinity, but makes no mention of Woodbridge. He may have invited the people of that town to attend his services at Perth Amboy, or he may have been in Woodbridge without mentioning it in his Diary. On the last of the above-mentioned visits to Perth Amboy, that of December 12th, 1703,³ we find him on the very next Sunday preaching at Elizabeth Town. As Woodbridge was on the direct road from Perth Amboy to Elizabeth Town, it is probable that Keith passed through Woodbridge on his way to Elizabeth Town. Perhaps he stopped at that time and made arrangements for his visit to Woodbridge which took place about a fortnight afterwards.

Keith's entry in his Diary for Wednesday, December 29th, 1703 is as follows: "I preached at the Independent's Meeting House in Woodbridge, at the Desire of Mr. Shepherd, and some others there, on I Tim. 3:16. After Sermon, Mr. Shepherd kindly entertained us at his House⁴." The "us" no doubt refers to the Reverend John Talbot⁵, who is mentioned by

Keith in his Diary for December 26th (three days before) as having been with him then. The "kindly" Mr. Shepherd at whose "Desire" George Keith preached at Woodbridge was none other than the Independent preacher, who ministered at Woodbridge from 1689 to 1706¹. What the results of this visit of the Reverend Mr. Keith were, we do not know directly, but in a letter from Keith to Dr. Bray, written in Philadelphia, February 24th, 1703-4 (two months after his visit to Woodbridge) we learn that: "At Amboy in East Jersey they have contributed about £200 toward building a Church and greatly desire a Minister²." In view of what he had written before leaving England (see above, page 22), it is likely that some Woodbridge people, unable yet to build a Church of England in their own town, assisted in building the Church at Amboy.

John Talbot visited Woodbridge regularly after Keith's return to England in 1704, but it is possible, perhaps probable, that he paid a visit or visits during the remainder of Keith's stay in America of which we have no actual record. This possibility is suggested by a quotation taken from the latter part of George Keith's Diary:

"During the most part of Winter, in the year 1703, Mr. Talbot, by my free Consent, did travel in diverse other Parts in Pennsylvania, West and East Jersey, Preaching and Baptizing many in those Parts where I was not with him³."

Another quotation from this Diary indicates what Talbot plans to do after bidding farewell to Keith⁴:

April 23, 1704. "Mr. Talbot accompanied me from Philadelphia to Annapolis in Maryland, where with true Love and Affection we did take our farewell of one another, and he returned to serve God and His Church, as formerly, especially in Pennsylvania, West and East Jersey, where he was like to have the greatest service and success⁵."

That Talbot carried out these plans and did in fact visit Woodbridge regularly until the summer of 1705 we know from the following letter written by him while in London, whither he had gone on Church business in 1706.

"Mr. Talbot to the S. P. G.

London, March 14, 1706.

"May it please the Reverend and Right Honorable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel:

"After I had travelled with Mr. G. Keith through nine or ten Provinces between New England and North Carolina, I took my leave of him in Maryland. The assembly then sitting offered me £100 sterling to go and Proselyte their Indians; but my call was to begin at home, and to teach our own People first, whose language we did understand; so I returned to Burlington to finish the Church which was happily begun there. Mr. Sharpe came to my assistance where I

¹Collection of the P. E. Hist. Soc. 1851, p. xi.

²October 1st, 1702; December 1702 (in the neighborhood for several days); October 31, 1703, and December 1703 (several days). See the "Diary of George Keith", Coll. of P. E. Hist. Soc. 1851.

³Keith's Diary. ⁴Coll. of P. E. Hist. Soc. 1851, p. 45.

⁵who is reported to have received (later) consecration as a Bishop by the Non-Jurors in England, and thus to have been the first Bishop of our Church on this Continent. He does not appear ever to have exercised his Episcopal Orders. For many years he was Rector of St. Mary's Church in Burlington, N. J. See Coll. P. E. Hist. Soc. 1851, back half of the volume.

¹Hist. Middlesex Co. 1921, p. 404. ²Coll. of P. E. Hist. Soc. 1851, p. xxii. ³Ibid. p. 46. ⁴In August of 1704 Mr. Keith reached England safely, and became Rector of Edburton in Sussex, where he ended his days. p. ix of Coll. of P. E. Hist. Soc. 1851. ⁵Ibid. p. 47.

left him to supply that hopeful and infant Church, whilst I went to East Jersey for Amboy, Elizabeth Town, Woodbridge, and Staten-Island. This we did by turns about half a year till Mr. Mott died who was Chaplain of the Queen's Fort and Forces at New York. I was offered this place also, where I should have board and lodging and £130 per annum, paid weekly; but nothing could tempt me from the service of the Society who were pleased to adopt me into their service, before I had the honour to know them. Mr. Sharpe was glad to embrace this offer; so I travelled alone, doing what good I could, till last summer, I met with Mr. John Brook who brought me a letter from my Lord of London and orders to fix at Burlington, as I did till November last¹. The letter goes on to tell that he has come over to London to present a petition for a Suffragan Bishop, and to solicit books, ministers, and help in spreading the Gospel in the Colonies. The letter is signed:

"John Talbot"

It will be seen from this letter that Talbot was assisted by the Reverend John Sharpe in this work for about six months, or until the autumn of 1704. They appear to have taken turns making the missionary journeys to Amboy and Woodbridge and Elizabeth Town, and Staten-Island. This is confirmed by a letter² from Mr. Talbot to Mr. Keith written from New York, October 20th, 1704³. But Mr. Sharpe became Chaplain of her Majesty's Fort and Forces at New York, so Mr. Talbot (who had just refused the attractive offer himself) was left to do the whole work alone, which he did until the summer of 1705, when he was ordered to "fix at Burlington." Even this settling at Burlington did not mean that he ceased to visit the different places.

Thus the first four Priests of the Church to bring God's Holy Word and Sacraments to Woodbridge were Edward Portlock, George Keith, John Talbot, and John Sharpe. And while it is evident that Perth Amboy was the first town in the present State or Diocese of New Jersey to have services of the Church, it would also appear that Woodbridge was the second⁴ town in the State to have such services, with Piscataway, Elizabeth Town, and Burlington following in that order.

¹Coll. of P. E. Hist. Soc. 1851, p. 58.

²Hills, "History of St. Mary's Church, Burlington", pp. 55-60.

³Hills erroneously dates this letter 1705, but the letter for several obvious reasons could not have been written as late as October 1705.

⁴Such is the implied order in Governor Basse's "History"; see extract on page 20 above.

CHAPTER III

The Building of the First Church

The Reverend John Brooke (or Brook) reached East Jersey in the summer of 1705 as John Talbot relates in his letter of March 14th, 1706,¹ and was advised² by the Governor (Lord Cornbury) to take charge of the work at Perth Amboy and Elizabeth Town, which he did. Other neighboring places (probably including Woodbridge, through which he would have passed every time he journeyed from Perth Amboy to Elizabeth Town) received his attention until he found he couldn't keep up with all his duties and he wrote in desperation: "I've so many places to take care of that I've scarce any time to study: neither can I supply any of them so well as they should be. I humbly beg therefore you'll be pleased to send a minister to take charge of Elizabeth Town and Rahway upon him, and I'll take all care I can of the rest³." This may mean that he took care of the faithful at Woodbridge by holding services there, or possibly he got them to attend his services in Perth Amboy. James Parker wrote in 1889: "Rev. John Brooke, who in 1705-7 officiated at Elizabeth Town and Perth Amboy, would probably have officiated at a place (i. e. Woodbridge) half way between the two; but there is no record of such services⁴."

This we do know: that John Talbot ceased his regular ministrations at Woodbridge during the summer of 1705, when John Brooke took up his residence in the vicinity. The former may have continued to make infrequent visits, but it is probable that those Woodbridge people who received the ministrations of our Church regularly received them from John Brooke either in Woodbridge or at Perth Amboy until 1707, when that priest left the Colonies for England.

From his departure in 1707 until the arrival of the Rev. Edward Vaughan in the autumn of 1709, John Talbot took services in the vicinity occasionally.

In 1711 a number of prominent people in Woodbridge invited Mr. Vaughan to hold regular services there. This was the first step in the founding of Trinity Church, Woodbridge.

The Invitation of 1711 was the result of a disaffection within the Independent congregation in Woodbridge. Some of the congregation wanted to become Presbyterians, while others wished to remain Independents. Mr. Wade, the Independent minister at the time, had leanings towards the Presby-

¹See extract on pages 23-24.

²According to a statement made in his first Report to the S. P. G., dated August 20th, 1705. Quoted by Jones (Hist. of St. Peter's, p. 35.)

³Quoted by Jones, p. 36.

⁴Parker, Historical Sketches of Parishes Represented in the Conventions of the P. E. Church in N. J., 1785-1816", 1889, p. 114.

terian change, which together with his personal unpopularity, caused many of the congregation to oppose him bitterly. In 1710 he entered the Presbytery of Philadelphia with part of his congregation¹. For some of the congregation this was the last straw, and the leaders of the opposition joined in addressing the invitation to Mr. Vaughan.

Two letters of Mr. Vaughan to the Secretary of the S. P. G. give us first hand the story of the founding of the Parish. The following are significant extracts:

"Elizabeth Town in the province
of New Jersey in America,
Feby. 28th, 1711/12.

Sir—

My monthly lecture at Rahway where I preach to a small congregation and catechise their children hath encouraged several families in Woodbridge an adjacent town to address me to officiate amongst them which I gladly and readily comply'd to having so evident a demonstration of their good disposition to receive the doctrine of the Gospel from my mouth and to embrace the Christian faith instead of the erroneous opinions of the Quakers and Independents who are very numerous in that place in which I hope in a short time to see a fabrick erected for the worship of God for all my Auditors there and other well disposed persons are willing and ready to encourage the building of it by their liberal contributions which I shall receive and apply to promote that laudable and pious design which I have communicated to the Honble. Coll. Hunter our Governor who has also been pleased to promise his license and bounty to enable us to accomplish that good work for the comfort and edification of these poor people who have all along been destitute of the means of salvation and have hitherto lived as without God in the world. Tho I reside at Elizabeth Town whose distance is 10 miles from Woodbridge Yet I promised thro' God's blessing to supply both cures by officiating on every Lord's Day in the forenoon in the former and once a fortnight in the afternoon in the latter which I hope to perform in the Summer time when the days are long but in the winter season I shall as I now do divide my service between both congregations by preaching alternately."²

The proposed Church building was partly erected as we see from the following letter:

"Amboy
Sept. 26th, 1716.

Sir

— considering the true state of the chapel of Woodbridge in N. J., which was a part of my charge, while I served the cure of Eliza. Town, and here I most humbly crave leave to represent to the honble Society, that as the people of Woodbridge whose distance is but 8 miles from Eliz Town and 4 from Amboy, are chiefly of English and Scotch extraction born in New England and Scotland and bred in both places in the greatest prejudice and opposition to the established Church of England so they were chiefly encouraged to settle there and in other parts of this province by certain concessions set forth and promulgated in the yr of our Lord 1664 by John Lord Barclay and Sir George Carteret the then Lords proprietors of this Province of New Jersey, among wch professions it was particularly granted and agreed by the sd Lords proprietors to and with all the adventurers and all such as

should come to settle and plant there, for their better encouragement, that they and every one of them should freely and fully have and enjoy his and their judgments and consciences in matters of religious worships and concerns and accordingly they have from the first settlement, and beginning of the said town of Woodbridge, all along and universally served and worshipped Almighty God, in the way and manner of independents and Quakers, till the yr of our Lord 1711: when such a no. of the inhabitants, as I shall have occasion presently to mention being deeply scandalized at, and much offended with the irregular life and conversation of Mr. Nathaniel Wade their then congregational teacher, were pleased to give me an invitation under their hands to come among them in these words.

"Sir, the unhappy difference between Mr. Wade and the people of Woodbridge is grown to that height that we cannot joyn with him in the worship of God as Christians ought to do it is the desire of some people here that if you think it may be for the Glory of God and no damage to other Churches, that you would be pleased to afford us your help sometimes on the Sabbath days according as you shall think convenient, we do it not with any intent to augment the difference among us, but rather hope, that with the blessing of God, it may be a means for our better joyning together in setting up the true worship of our Lord Jesus here among us a poor deluded people, this is the desire of your humble servants,

Rich Smith	Amos Goodwin	John Bishop
John Ashton	Gersham Higgins	William Bingle
Benjm Donham	Henry Rolph	Robert Wright
		George Eubanks.

Their request — attended with the offer of an house of Mr Benjm Denham (Donham or Dunham) of that place to assemble in for the service of worship of God, filled me with hopes that a door and effectual was opened unto me and that among many adversaries that oppose the truth in that place, I therefore gave them to understand, that I would by the grace of God, wait upon them in the sd Town monthly on the Lords Day, to preach the Gospel to them and as many as resorted thither which I did for several yrs according to the appointed time in the house of the sd Gentlemen, and after frequent discourses, to, and with them concerning the benefit of conformity the excellency of set forms of prayers in the worship of God and the usefulness of the decent rites and revd ceremonies of the Church of England wch I represented as she really and truly is, inferior nor second to none in the world, either for soundness of doctrine or purity of worship, I introduced amongst them for the public services and worship of God the use of our most excellent Liturgy prescribed by the publick authority of the Church and they not only submitted to it without opposition but recd it with all the marks of approbation, whereupon I recommended to their consideration the building and erecting a structure for the more orderly and decent performance of that way of worship, and to authorize and impower us to collect such sums of money and other helps as charitable and religious people should be disposed to contribute to that design, I made application to his Excellency our Governor for his licence wch was no sooner asked than obtained with the additional favour of his Excellency's benevolence of £5 toward our pious undertaking, this method, has so far proved prosperous that we have been enabled, by the voluntary contributions of well disposed persons, with the free will offerings of ourselves, given likewise in the way of subscriptions as well to lay the foundation of that work, and to raise a large and convenient timber frame thereon, as to cover and finish the outward part or shell of it.

Its situation is upon a piece or lot of ground appropriated in the first settlement of the town, for that use and purpose, by the very prudent and pious care of Philip Carteret, Esq. and then Governor of

¹Dally, History of Woodbridge and Vicinity, pp. 169ff.

²"Hawks Transcripts" of the S. P. G. Letters, Vol. 7 (1711-1712). These Hawks Transcripts are now in the archives of the New York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West, New York City.

this Province of New Jersey under the then Lds Proprietors, John Ld Barclay and Sir George Carteret aforesaid this is all that is yet done to that building, Tho I really believe that the inward part of it would have been likewise fitted up decently for the use, if the death of Mr. Benjn Dunham one of the prime managers, who sometime before submitted to the ordinance of Baptism, had not intervened with my separation from them by means of the honble Society's limiting my services to the cure of Amboy and Piscataway in which I now serve, without affording any help or assistance to the good people of Woodbridge lest I should violate or transgress the honble Society's commands in the latter part of the last paragraph of Mr. Secretary Taylor requiring me viz to use my best endeavours to promote the Glory of God and the Good of Souls, especially of those committed to my care. This paragraph is in my humble opinion clear and express against my extending labours to those not particularly committed to my care and carries in it likewise an implication if I mistake not, as if I had already offended in that particular and had encroached upon the line and province of another if any representation of that kind hath been made to the honble Society whether by word or writing I desire they will please not to give any credit to it for I do humbly assure them with the sincerity of a Christian and of a Christian Priest, that *cujus contrarium est verum*, unless it be interpreted, that my former serving the people of Woodbridge for the reasons aforesaid, was such, I am not in the least afraid of this imputation, while I have the honour and happiness of being judged by the honble Society who I am sure can better distinguish.

If the Hon Society please I will serve Woodbridge and Eliz. Town as I did before, thus having briefly considered not only the original and nature of the people of Woodbridge but the reasons and motives of their settlement there together with an account as well of their religious disposition and inclinations as of the methods and steps that have been used and taken to plant and propagate the true religion amongst them as established in the Church of England. I humbly submit it as a true state of that Church to the great wisdom and pious consideration of the Hon Society assuring them that nothing is contained in the whole relation but matter of fact, and that they shall always find me their

faithful missionary
and obedient servant

Edward Vaughan¹

George Eubanks, one the signers of the Invitation of 1711, was the village school-teacher, and "a man of some ability."² Dally says "it was he, perhaps, who penned the invitation of Mr. Vaughan by which the latter was induced to come to Woodbridge to establish the Episcopal services, for his name comes last on the paper."²

Two other signers: John Bishop and Richard Smith, were undoubtedly related to the John Bishop³ and John Smith³ who were two of the original nine associates who received the Charter of the Township of Woodbridge in 1669, and so were members of distinguished families as each of the associates received special grant and privileges.

Benjamin Dunham was, perhaps, the most prominent singer. He was the son of Jonathan Dunham, the great Wood-

bridge miller, and a man of considerable influence.¹ Dunham placed a house² at the disposal of the new missionary shortly after he began to hold services. This house probably was situated within the precincts of "Dunhamtown"³, just north of the Meetinghouse Green. Benjamin Dunham was an ardent supporter of the project to build a Church. He and nine others petitioned the Governor to grant a License to build a Church for worship after the manner of the Church of England.

"To His Excellency, Robert Hunter, Esq., Captain Generall and Governor-in-Chief of the Provinces of new Jersey and new York Vice Admiral of the same, etc.,

The Petic'on of the Subscribers Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Town of Woodbridge in the Province of sd Newe Jersey Humbly sheweth.

That the peti'oners Esteeming themselves under an Indespensible Obligac'on to Promote the Public Worship of God after the maner of the Church of England as by Law Established and having no church in the said Towne nor Publick House for Divine Worship to which they can Claime liberty to resort

Do therefore humbly pray that yr Excellency would be pleased to Grant them your License for Erecting a Church in the said Towne for the service of God. And that your Excellencie would allow and authorize the Petic'oners or some of them to Receive the Charitable Benevolence of Godly and well disposed Persons for assisting the Petic'oners by their Contributions to Accomplish their Intended Design, and your Excellencies Petic'oners as in Duty shall ever Pray (December 1713)

Robert Wright
John Shippoy
D. Hooglandt

Benjamin Donham
John Bishop
John Alston

John (his mark) Halker

Geo Ewanke
Henry Rolph
Philis Dennis⁴

The License was granted in December 1713, and a frame building was begun. The land upon which the Church was erected is represented as having been a portion of the 200 acres originally set aside for Church purposes.⁵

At about this time (1713) a violent rupture occurred between the two neighboring missionaries: Vaughan and Halliday. The latter in his letter of April 11, 1713 to the Secretary of the S. P. G. refers to Mr. Vaughan as follows:

Burlington
April 11, 1713.

— (referring to Mr. Vaughan) "there are some Brethren whose judgment I prefer to my own say there is not a more Lazy Lob of a Man in the whole country, he hath for several months been sick of the fever and ague and so unable to serve, and if it had been no more but that I was there to supply those places which by his sickness had been quite destitute, —. — There is one great complaint I know will be made against me; and that is the choosing Mr. Seamans Church Warden. It is true he keeps a whore, which ruins his soul, —." "T. Halliday"⁶

¹Dally, Hist. of Woodbridge, pp. 123-124.

²Parker, writing in 1889, calls it a barn!

³Dally, History of Woodbridge, p. 123-4.

⁴Documents relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey, edited by Wm. A. Whitehead, Vol. IV, pp. 189-190.

⁵Whitehead, Early History of Perth Amboy, p. 390.

⁶Hawks MSS, Volume of New Jersey under year 1713.

¹Hawks MSS (New Jersey Volume, pp. 181-186).

²Dally, Hist. of Woodbridge, p. 181.

³Hist. of Middlesex Co., 1921, p. 19.

The Churches at Woodbridge and Perth Amboy were closed to Mr. Halliday by the influence of Mr. Vaughan and Mr. Talbot.¹

The graveyard surrounding the Church was first used about the year 1714,² although the oldest headstone still standing³ (in 1935) goes back only to 1750. In 1882 a stone dated 1715 was still standing at the rear of the Church⁴: the stone of Benjamin Dunham. His untimely death at the age of 35, on December 31st, 1715, brought about a complete cessation of the building of the first Church, in which project he had been the prime mover. His passing had a most depressing effect upon the congregation, with the result that the Church was never finished (although services were sometimes held in it in fair weather) and the work at Woodbridge started to decline.

In 1716 Mr. Halliday wrote the following letter to the Secretary of the Society in which he comments on some of the difficulties encountered at Woodbridge, Newark, and Elizabeth Town:

(Extract)

Elizabeth Town
8th Novr 1716.

"May it please the Venerable and Honourable Society — In this part of East Jersey there are three large Townships, Newark, Eliza Town and Woodbridge, which consist of upwards of a thousand families, the chief settlers of which were New England Independents who are now old and conformed in their erroneous way. In each of these towns there is a large Independent Congregation who support their preachers with the allowance of £80 per annum, besides House Glebe and perquisites of marriages. The Church are only one handful of people from England and Scotland not passing 60 families in any congregation in this division. By which it appears that the generality of the country being bound to their preachers by the prejudices of their education leave but a small number of the people to us, who considering that we are under the protection of so powerful a body as the Society, think that we need but very little from them; and indeed less than also nothing at all do we receive."⁵ He then goes on to recommend (having had six years experience) that His Majesty command the Assembly to compel each County to raise a sum of not less than £35 per annum for the support of a minister.

It will be seen from the following letter of Mr. Halliday that he and Mr. Vaughan have agreed to serve Elizabeth Town, Piscataway, Woodbridge, Amboy, and Freehold jointly, thus bringing to an end their disagreement of 1713.

"Mr. Halliday to the Secretary (Extract)

Amboy
Octr 9th 1717.

May it please the Hon Society

That if the Society would procure a donation of 200 acres of land from the proprietors of the soil for the use of the Church in each place where they send a missionary and if the Society could spare for some time a dozen of good negroes from Barbadoes who

might clear that land, fence, dung, plant, orchard, make clover, pasture, burn brick kilns, build parsonage house and not only so but with a little expense they might build churches. This Plantation so improved would afford a missionary a more plentiful substance than the remittance of £70 or £100 sterling from England for this with labour by his servants he might be supplied with what is necessary for the maintenance and support of a family and such a plantation and support of a family and such a plantation would be a freehold in perpetuity of the Church in the presentation of the Society or on whomsoever they should devolve it to which the missionary would be legally instituted and induced and this would remain to the memory of the pious endeavours of the Hon Society in all future ages.

Agreed between the Rev. Mr. Vaughan and myself that we should jointly write to this purpose viz. that Eliz. Town, Piscataway, Woodbridge, Amboy and Freehold should be served by a circular turn and should have liberty to reside in any of the places as should be most for convenience and comfort, all this with the greatest submission I humbly offer —."

During the same year he wrote another letter in which he reported to the Society: "In Woodbridge there is a timber frame clap boarded without either floor or glass; it was built by a subscription procured by Mr. Vaughan which was near a £100 — money very well laid out though there is but a small congregation belongs to it. The ground on which it stands was given by Governor Cartwright (he means Governor Philip Carteret) to the Church for parsonage, etc., on which land there is no considerable improvements, new brick buildings, etc., and I'll procure you a copy of the Deed and send it to your Secretary."²

Concerning this same Church building, the following extract from a letter is of interest. It was written September 22nd, 1764, by James Parker, the Woodbridge printer: "I remember a very small Church or building was standing in this village about forty-five years ago (that would have been about 1719), and divine service was sometimes performed in it; but the number of the members were so few, and these but poor, the building fell to the ground."³ As Parker was a member of the Church of England, "acting occasionally as a lay-reader in the Woodbridge congregation, and as the letter from which this extract is taken was sent to the authorities of that Church in England no doubt can exist that the building he refers to was the First Episcopal Church in this place."⁴

The Reverend Mr. Halliday seems to have left the Province in 1718.⁵

¹Dally, Hist. of Woodbridge, pp. 126-127.

²A Hist. of Union and Middlesex Counties published 1882, p. 577.

³The inscription: "(Ma)ry Daur of Seriah (8) Hannah Bunn Aged 3 (7) years Decd. Decr. 30th, 1750.

⁴Hist. of Union and Middlesex Counties, 1882, p. 572.

⁵Hawks MSS, Vol. 12 (1716).

¹Hawks MSS, Vol. New Jersey, pp. 193-194.

²Ibid., date August 1, 1717 or 1718, written from Elizabeth Town.

³Hawks MSS: see the longer extract from this letter below, pages 38-39.

⁴Dally, History of Woodbridge, page 126.

⁵Ibid., pp. 126-127.

CHAPTER IV

James William Skinner

The Revd. James William Skinner became Rector of St. Peter's Church, Perth Amboy, in 1722, where he remained for over 35 years.¹ This long rectorate, together with other contributing causes, proved a sorry time for the infant Church in Woodbridge. Mr. Skinner was so engrossed in building up a strong Parish in Perth Amboy that he had little time (after the first two years: 1722-1724) to bestow upon Woodbridge and Piscataway, both of which were placed under his charge. We learn this latter fact from a Report made by Edward Vaughan² to the Bishop of London in 1724, written from Elizabeth Town in New Jersey, when he had been a missionary 15 years in New Jersey. "I have together with that (Elizabeth Town) served the Church at Amboy, Piscataqua, and Woodbridge till the Honble Society were pleased about 18 months ago (i. e. 1722) to devolve the care of them upon their missionary, the Revd. James William Skinner."³

Mr. Skinner visited Woodbridge occasionally on Sunday afternoons,⁴ but in a letter to the Secretary, written from Perth Amboy on March 7, 1722/3 he expresses a hope that he will be able to preach more frequently at Woodbridge as soon as the season of better weather permits.

"I came to this place November 22nd, 1722. — I have preached but once at Woodbridge, for the Church there, being made up of Clap boards, nailed together in a very sorry manner, and nothing done to the inside, one can hardly be in it any space of time in the winter without imminent danger. Those that raised that Church are dead some years and the place being within four miles of Amboy, those of the Church of England which are there but three attend here (at Amboy) but so soon as the season permits I design, God willing, that Sunday I preach at Amboy to preach at Woodbridge in the afternoon, hoping some people at Amboy will be so religiously disposed as to accompany me till such time as by the blessing of God, I can glean a congregation there; and though I have but little hope of finding acceptance with a New England people, by which that place is chiefly settled, yet I am resolved to try, trusting in Providence for success."⁵

Mr. Skinner had enjoyed an exciting past before coming to Perth Amboy. Among other adventures he took part in the Rebellion of 1715 in Scotland and was wounded in the Battle of Preston-pans while in the ranks of the Old Pretender's Army.⁶

On May 22, 1724 Mr. Skinner writes to the Secretary of the S. P. G.: "I continue to minister at Woodbridge as



Trinity Church: The Second Church Building. From an old drawing made by William A. Whitehead in 1838

¹Jones, Hist. of St. Peters, p. 45.

²Mr. Vaughan remained at Elizabeth Town until his death in 1747.

³Hawks MSS, Vol. New Jersey, p. 261. ⁴Tanner "Province of New Jersey", 1908, p. 595.

⁵Hawks MSS, Vol. 16. ⁶Jones, Hist. of St. Peters, p. 49.

formerly."¹ On July 1st of that year "A List of the Several Parishes or places where Divine Service is performed according to the rites of the Church of England in South and North Carolina, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and New England, with an Account of the Present Income belonging to each Parish or place", was drawn up from the Books of the S. P. G.² The following appears about Amboy and Woodbridge:

"Amboy — The minister whereof also supplies Piscatoqua and Woodbridge, two other Churches in the neighborhood. The Rev. Mr. Skinner is the present minister. (Allowance from the Society: £60. Voluntary Contributions about £30 per annum, New York money)."³

In 1724 Queries were sent to every minister of the S. P. G. in America, to be answered by them. The following is an extract from Mr. Skinner's report, dated October 7, 1724 from Perth Amboy in New Jersey:⁴

"Began June 25, 1722, arrived in Perth Amboy, November 22nd, 1722. At Perth Amboy I preach once a day and perform the service twice, two Sundays successively, excepting those Sundays, afternoons When I preach and perform the Divine Service at Woodbridge a place four miles distant from Amboy. At Woodbridge about 50 auditors (only 150 auditors at Amboy), but almost all are dissenters, and violently attended to the New England Scheme." "At Woodbridge, not at all" is the answer to the Question "How oft is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper administered?"⁴

Mr. Skinner remained as Rector of St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, until his death in 1758 at the age of 70, but from 1724 to 1758 we have no mention in the letters that have come down to us of his efforts at Woodbridge. James Parker, writing in 1889, says that until 1752 Mr. Skinner held services at Woodbridge "at long intervals."⁵ The house or barn which Benjamin Dunham had put at the disposal of the missionaries for Church services in 1711 appears to have been no longer used for this purpose after 1725.⁶

In writing to the Secretary of the Society in 1752, the Reverend Thomas B. Chandler reported that the Church people of Woodbridge "had not been visited by any of our clergy for upwards of twenty years."⁷ It seems probable, therefore, that from about 1725 or 1730 to 1752 the work of the Church in Woodbridge came to a halt, and the Church building itself fell into ruins. During these years some of the congregation attended Mr. Skinner's services at St. Peter's Church in Perth Amboy, while others joined the local dissenting bodies.⁸

¹Hawks MSS (Vol. 18) 1724.

²Collections of the Protestant Episcopal Society (Historical), 1851, p. 121.

³Ibid. p. 124. ⁴Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, p. 265.

⁵Historical Sketches of Parishes, etc., by James Parker, 1889, pp. 114-115. This James Parker should not be confused with the earlier man by that name.

⁶Ibid. p. 114. ⁷Hawks MSS., New Jersey Volume, pp. 477, 478.

⁸Dally, History of Woodbridge, p. 129.

CHAPTER V

The Building of the Second Church

In 1751 James Parker set up the first printing press in New Jersey at Woodbridge. He was an earnest Churchman and began at once to get the services of the Church revived.

Edward Vaughan, the faithful missionary, who had held services for eleven or more years at Woodbridge from 1711 to 1722, had died at his post at Elizabeth Town in 1747. His successor, Thomas Bradbury Chandler, was invited to revive the Church at Woodbridge. The whole story comes to us direct from him in his letters which have happily been preserved.

Elizabeth Town, May 1, 1752.

Rev'd. Sir

— Among other places I had an early invitation to preach at Woodbridge, which is ten miles distant situated on the Public Road from hence to Philadelphia. I was glad to accept it and accordingly I have preached there six times already and have hitherto and design hereafter punctually to discharge. It is a country town large and populous as most in these parts, but the no. of the families there, I have not yet learnt. There were formerly a few families there, that professed themselves of the Church of England; but they had not been visited by any of our clergy for upwards of twenty years, there are two congregations there, one of Presbyterians and the other of Quakers. The latter of which has very much increased of late years appearances now are much in favour of the Church there, and I have seldom had less than 200 hearers.

Some of the dissenters at Woodbridge wonder that I take so much pains to come there, and think that I am limited by the Society to Eliza Town and I believe it would be best upon the whole, if they would set me down in their abstracts for Eliza Town and Woodbridge. It will give a greater sanction to my endeavours and may in time be of service upon several accounts."¹

Two days later he wrote a letter to a close friend, the Rev'd. Dr. Johnson, President of King's (now Columbia University) College at New York telling of the hopefulness of his work at Woodbridge. The present writer had the privilege of discovering this important letter in the archives of the New York Historical Society, where he copied the following extract from the original.

"Eliz May 3, 1752.

I had frequent invitations to preach at Raway, Aft-Swamp, and Woodbridge, at one or other of which places I have preached almost every week. And what has made me the more attentive to this work is that Appearances are much in favour of the Church in all these places, especially at Woodbridge, which has for a long series of years been under the Care of Mr. Pierson, the Presbyterian and of Jo: Shadwell's wife, the Quaker, and has scarcely for 30 years had a visit from a Clergyman of our Church; but notwithstanding, I have a

¹Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, p. 477ff.

prospect of gathering a fine Congregation there. So that besides visiting my Parishoners at home, and preaching two sermons on Sundays, which is business more than enough to fill up the time of a young and raw Practitioner; my work is greatly increased by the care I take of those Places."

He then goes on to tell how lonesome he is and how he longs for a companion—and how a fair parishoner of his attracts him, and he visits her frequently!

We find him addressing another letter to the Secretary on November 6th, 1752:

(Extract)

Written from Elizabeth Town

Rev'd. Sir,

As to Woodbridge I still continue to give them a monthly lecture whereby I have greatly succeeded. I believe about 200 constantly attend them among which about 15 families may now be called nearly conformists to the Church. The Presbyterians there are so alarmed at the growth of the Church that about 2 mos. ago they dismissed their minister who had been their teacher for more than 30 years and with whom before they had scarce any difference. For no manner of reason but his being somewhat dull and too feeble an antagonist against the Church; and this they have done in hopes of getting in his place a man more gifted and better able to maintain his grounds, but as their number are diminished, and as they are divided amongst themselves, I very much question whether they are able to call loud enough, to use their own phrase."²

Within two years Mr. Chandler had accomplished much at Woodbridge as the following sentence (taken from a letter to the Secretary dated December 16th, 1754) shows:

"By means of a monthly lecture at Woodbridge 10 miles distant which I voluntarily undertook (and a regular attendance upon which thro' all the seasons has cost me much fatigue and many hardships) there are now 20 Families Professors of the Church of England and several communicants where 3 years past there was but one family."³

The Society's report shows that "The Rev. Mr. Chandler, the Society's Missionary to Elizabeth Town and Woodbridge doth great good in his station —."⁴ This indicates that his request of two years before had been granted and that he was officially in charge of the Church's work at Woodbridge. He was doing so well that a new Church was badly needed (the old one being too ruined for use) and so a "small but decent"⁵ Church was begun.

This growth was taking place just at the time of one of Mr. George Whitefield's tours of preaching in the colonies. His itinerary included an engagement to preach at Woodbridge on Wednesday afternoon, September 12th, 1754,⁶ according to a notice in the Pennsylvania Gazette.⁶ His presence does not seem to have disturbed or distracted the members of our communion in Woodbridge, for they went on enthusiastically to complete their second Church edifice.

²Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, p. 480f.

³Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, p. 484.

⁴Clark's "Hist. of St. John's Church, Eliza Town", 1857, p. 80.

⁵The adjectives used by T. B. Chandler in his letter of Jan. 5, 1762, Hawks MSS, N. J. Vol. p. 501ff.

⁶He preached again in Woodbridge on Wed., June 20, 1770.

⁷Documents relating to Col. Hist. of N. J., Vol. 19, p. 409.

This new Church appears to have been built on the site of the first building.¹ It was a plain frame structure with shingled sides and a fair-sized belfry. Mr. William Whitehead, the New Jersey Historian made a sketch of the building in 1838, several reproductions of which have survived to this day. This sketch enables us to see what this second church (which burned down in 1858) looked like. The church, begun in 1754, had been finished by October 31st, 1756 when Mr. Chandler wrote "The Church at Woodbridge is finished and the Society hath given a Folio Bible and Common Prayer Book for the use thereof."² This fine old Folio Bible, published in London at "one pound and five shillings" in 1751, is still (in 1935) in the possession of the Church.

Mr. Chandler officiated at Woodbridge once a month. In his absence James Parker conducted the services as lay-reader to the general satisfaction of all concerned. Mr. Parker married Gertrude,³ the only daughter of the Reverend William Skinner, Rector of St. Peter's Church, Perth Amboy, who had served Woodbridge for so many years (1722-1752), and who died at Perth Amboy in 1758 at the age of 70.

In 1757 Mr. Chandler suffered severely from the small pox,⁴ from which he did not recover fully until 1760. This dangerous sickness naturally interrupted his work. There seems to have been quite a fatal epidemic of small pox throughout the Province during these years. The populations of towns decreased, and Church work everywhere was greatly hindered during the plague, and afterwards by loss of so many faithful members. After his recovery, Mr. Chandler found it impossible to visit Woodbridge once a month, and visited it once in six weeks instead.⁵ He writes about this to the Secretary of the Society from Elizabeth Town on July 5th, 1760:

"My congregations both here and in Woodbridge have suffered much by the loss of many useful and reputable persons who have died of the small pox, which distemper was never so epidemical in these parts nor attended with such ill effects to the unhappy patients. To much more than half of those who had it here in the natural way it proved fatal. Nothing else material has happened in my Mission. I continue to do my duty here and at Woodbridge in the best manner I am able and have reason to hope that I am not altogether unsuccessful."⁶

At Christmas 1760, a beautiful silver chalice, inscribed "The gift of Mary Dennis, Widow; to Trinity Church, in Woodbridge, December ye 25th, 1760." The silver mark is "H & M". This fine old Chalice is still in the possession of the Church. Bishop George Washington Doane (of New Jersey) said of this chalice in his Episcopal Address of 1840:

"I have often thought, as it struck my eye, at my annual commemoration of the Holy Communion, in that simple little sanctuary how many hearts have been refreshed and strengthened, through God's blessing on that pious gift, in the long lapse of eighty yrs.; with what a beautiful propriety the festival of the Nativity was made the day of its donation; and how peculiarly touching, that the one remembrance that has been preserved of her who gave it, is her widowhood. Happy they who, in the bereavement of the ties on earth, are drawn more closely to the holy altar and give their hearts to God."¹

The inscription of the 1760 chalice is the first time that the name "Trinity Church, in Woodbridge" has appeared. One wonders whether the name was adopted under the influence of Mr. Chandler, when the second Church was built 1754-1756, or whether it goes back of that time, perhaps to the ministry of Mr. Vaughan and the building of the first Church in 1713.

On January 5, 1762 Thomas Bradbury Chandler writes to the Society pleading on behalf of the vacant Church at Amboy that a missionary be sent there and expressing the hope that when someone was sent he would be given the charge of Woodbridge, which was proving too great a burden to the more distant Rector of St. John's Church in Elizabeth Town. In this interesting letter² he retells the story of his work at Woodbridge from the very beginning, stating that he has preached there every six Sundays and administered the Holy Communion thrice a year. He suggests that the new missionary to Amboy preach in Woodbridge every Sunday afternoon.

Three weeks after the above letter was written, the Vestry of St. Peter's Church, Perth Amboy, wrote to the Society saying that they had heard the Reverend Robert McKean (the Society's missionary at New Brunswick) would consent to be removed to Amboy, and begged the Society to transfer him.³ The Society acted upon this request favourably and Mr. McKean presented the Society's letter to this effect to the Vestry on Feb. 9, 1763.⁴ Shortly thereafter the oversight of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, was transferred from the Reverend Thomas B. Chandler to the Reverend Robert McKean.⁵

Thus was brought to a close the relationship between Trinity Church and Thomas Bradbury Chandler, perhaps the greatest priest in the American Church prior to the war of the Revolution.⁶ The Parish may well take pride in having enjoyed the faithful services of such a man for so many years.

¹Dally, Hist. of Woodbridge, p. 129.

²Parker, Sketch of Parishes in N. J., 1889, pp. 114-7.

³Dally, Hist. of Woodbridge, p. 129.

⁴Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, pp. 501ff (letter of Jan. 5, 1762).

⁵Hist. of Middlesex and Union Counties, 1882, p. 572.

⁶Clark's Hist. of St. John's, Eliz., 1857, p. 82.

¹Diocesan Journal, N. J. for 1840.

²Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, pp. 501ff.

³Jones, History of St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, p. 57.

⁴Ibid. p. 58.

⁵Ibid. p. 60.

⁶Mr. Chandler had to flee from the Colonies during the Revolutionary War because of his British sympathies, but returned to St. John's, Elizabeth, after the war and died there in the year 1790. R. I. P.

CHAPTER VI

The Last Years under the S. P. G.

The Reverend Robert McKean took up his duties at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, in 1763, giving one third of his time to that parish and two-thirds to St. Peter's Church in Perth Amboy. In writing to the S. P. G. under the date of September 10th of that year he says that this division of labour will, he believes, prove satisfactory: especially in view of the fact that James Parker, Esq., a member of Trinity Church, will conduct the service each Sunday he is not there.¹

Half a year later we have more news about Woodbridge in the following extract from his letter to the Secretary of the Society:

Perth Amboy
April 16, 1764.

"Reverend Sir,

In my present Mission agreeably to the regulation of the two Vestries I have continued to officiate in general two thirds of the time at this place and one third at Woodbridge, which has hitherto appeared satisfactory to both and as often as I perform Divine Service here during the milder seasons I catechise the children in the afternoon and have made a tender of the same service at Woodbridge but as yet no Catechumens have offered. —

In Woodbridge there are about twelve Families regularly belonging to our Church which with a few individuals generally attending our service tho' connected with Families of different persuasions include fifty persons. The Township of Woodbridge is extensive and contains a considerable number of Presbyterians and Quakers and other denominations which I cannot ascertain and there may be probably within its bounds some more Church people that have not come to my knowledge or who may attend at Elizabeth Town on which it borders. The number above mentioned is that composing the Congregation which I serve. —

In Woodbridge there are fourteen (communicants). —

Robt McKean"²

In September of the same year (1764) James Parker wrote a most illuminating letter to the Society of which the following is an extract:

Woodbridge in New Jersey
Sept. 22, 1764

"Rev. Sir,

At the desire of a very small congregation of people in this Township who profess themselves to the established Church of England you are troubled with this letter in order to acquaint the Venerable Society of as just a state of our situation and case as may be. This part of the country was first settled generally by dissenters except some few but Perth Amboy 4 or 5 miles distant were chiefly of the Church. I remember a very small church or building was standing

in this village about 45 yrs ago and divine service was sometimes performed in it but the no. of members were so few and those but poor the building fell to the ground. Some few a very few that were warmest professors of the Church would often travel to Perth Amboy to divine service whilst others not able to travel or perhaps not willing went to the Presbyterian worship by which means many of their descendants are at this time zealously attached to their meetings who would otherwise probably have belonged to the Church. About 10 or 11 yrs. ago the small no. of Churchmen left here having been visited and administered to divers times by the Rev. Mr. Chandler of Eliz Town set about new building a small church here for the worship of God according to their own way of thinking but as we did not exceed 14 families and most of them very poor it was with great difficulty we got it so far built as to shelter us from the weather. All our own endeavours to more than half seat it hath hitherto been ineffectual nor do I think we shall ever be able to finish it without help and though there are rich congregations of the Church in N. Y. and Philadelphia (one 30 miles east of us the other 70 miles west of us) Yet our interest is too small to obtain much relief from either of them they saying they have buildings enough of their own on hand. The Rev. Mr. Chandler continued to visit us sometime as we understood by order of the Venerable Society for which we are bound to be thankful to them but as he visited us but seldom and it pleased Providence to have given me ability to perform the service, I freely undertook it and as I suppose to the general satisfaction of the congregation.

I have continued it as well as my poor ability would permit to the present time and I can say for myself it has been a real pleasure to me to see any of my endeavours acceptable or any way apparently useful propagating true Religion and Piety. I neither wish nor hope for any reward in this life as it will be more than a compensation if I meet with any in the next for tho I can trust to the promises of blessed Jesus yet I at best fall far short of my duty. It hath pleased God to gather and increase the Church here a little tho the chief of us being old cant hope long to continue notwithstanding our children we hope are growing up in the same path.

Your most devoted humble servant
James Parker

In the behalf and desire of the
rest of the congregation"

During the year 1765 Mr. McKean was seized with the sickness which probably led up to his untimely death two years later. He wrote:

"I was seized with a very tedious and dangerous sickness that rendered me entirely incapable of any business for about 3 months. During that time, however, I have my Church in this Place very happily and satisfactorily supplied, principally by the kind labours of the Rev. Mr. Bennett, Chaplain of the 28th Regiment, half of which is quartered here and partly by the assistance of my Brethren who favoured me with their friendly and brotherly visits, and did everything in their power to serve me in my affliction, but it was impracticable to extend the like help to Woodbridge."²

"Mr. McKean to the Secretary (Extract)

Perth Amboy
April 27, 1767.

Reverend Sir,

— At Woodbridge I have had the accession of one large family, the head of this a Tradesman and Farmer of good reputation as

¹Jones, History of St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, p. 60.
²Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, p. 529.

¹Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, pp. 541-544.

²Jones, Hist. of St. Peter's, p. 62.

having for some years frequented our service and declaring himself descended of parents that belonged to the Church and having never joined himself to any other society though he had but few opportunities of public worship engaged me to make him a visit and to officiate at his house 7 or 8 miles back in the country from the Church at Woodbridge which I accordingly did about the middle of last October. Here I met a large no. of people assembled on the occasion and after divine service baptized 7 of his children. Though this person had been generally regular in his attendance at Woodbridge since my appointment to this Mission yet I did not consider him as united to the Church until this time, that he brought his family into it."¹

The Reverend Robert McKean died on October 17, 1767.² His brother became a Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, thrice Governor of that state, President of Delaware, was one of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, and later became President of the Federated Congress, the form of government which for a short time preceded the present form of Government in the United States.³ "The prominence that his brother attained in the State would have been Robert's lot in the Church had he lived. Young and full of zeal, he gave promise of being one of the greatest leaders of the Church in the Colonies had he not been cut off when only thirty-five years old, by consumption."⁴

Seven days later, the Reverend Mr. Chandler was busy writing a letter in behalf of the bereaved congregations of Woodbridge and Perth Amboy. This interesting letter (the original of which is in the possession of the New York Historical Society) clearly indicates the importance of the work at those two places in the opinion of the correspondent.

(MS Letter of T. B. Chandler) (Extract)
(Mr. McKean died on the 17th)

"Eliz Town
Oct. 24, 1767."

"The People of Amboy and Woodbridge have desired me to represent their case to the venle Society, and to request the Continuance of their Favour in sending them another Missionary.

The Congregation in Woodbridge is small, much smaller by Reason of Deaths and Removals than while it was under my care. But they are a very sober religious People, well grounded in the Principles of the Church, and from the beginning have never neglected to keep their public Worship by reading some parts of the Liturgy and a Sermon every Sunday, when they have been without a Minister. By this steadiness the Prejudices of the neighboring Dissenters against the Church have visibly abated; some families have been proselyted, and the way is considerably prepared for the accession of more, which in due time may be reasonably expected.

From these circumstances the Society will naturally conclude that the Mission of Amboy and Woodbridge is of great Importance, and really worthy of their Attention and Patronage — and that it requires a Clergyman of Abilities, and who is acquainted with the world, to fill it properly.

T. B. Chandler."

¹Hawks MSS, Vol. N. J., pp. 615-616.

²MS Letter of T. B. Chandler written October 24th, 1767. Original letter in the archives of the New York Historical Society.

³Jones, Hist. of St. Peter's p. 62. ⁴Ibid. p. 62.

Mr. Chandler wrote on December 4th to the Secretary stating that "Rev. Mr. Browne of Newark — desires a removal from that mission — to the Mission of Amboy and Woodbridge —." The Revd. Isaac Browne was appointed by the Society, but the appointment was not pleasing to the Vestry of St. Peter's Church in Perth Amboy.

In the meantime, however, fortunately for the Church, the Reverend John Preston, Chaplain of the 26th Regiment, was stationed in Perth Amboy at the time of Mr. McKean's death — and took over his work as he relates in the following letter to the Secretary.

"When the 26th Regt. landed in this place in July 1767, I found Mr. McKean in such a bad state of health that he was incapable of doing duty. I therefore made him an offer of my services, as far as was consistent, at Amboy, Brunswick, and Elizabeth Town, and there being a clergyman at the last place, I would divide my time between Brunswick and this town upon condition that reception of the soldiers was made in the Church. This being accepted of, I officiated alternately one Sunday here and the other at Brunswick till the arrival of Mr. Beach. After that I confined my services monthly to this place, going sometimes to Woodbridge."¹

About a year later, the necessary consents having been received from the military authority (General Gage) and the S. P. G.², Mr. Preston became the Rector of St. Peter's. He conducted services at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, and when he was not present there, Mr. Bingley read the services.³

At about this period the following tabulation was made of the number of places of worship in New Jersey of the different bodies of Christians:

"Presbyterians	46
Quakers	38
Episcopalians	21
Dutch Calvinists	21
Baptists	19
Dutch Lutherans	7
Seventh Day Adventists	2
Moravians	1" ⁴

The Chamber of Commerce idea seems to have had an early inception in Woodbridge as indicated by the following advertisement in the Pennsylvania Chronicle for the week of March 21-28, 1768:

"To the Public —

"This Town besides its agreeable rural situation, has the great advantage of a wholesome pleasant air, and hence its being very healthy to recommend it, — properties evinced from long experience by the inhabitants, and the suffrage of gentlemen, strangers, acquainted with it. It is also surrounded by an extensive beautiful country, from which it has constant supplies of all necessaries of life in great variety and plenty, and from the sea, in the season, has also plenty of fish, oysters, etc.

¹Jones, Hist. of St. Peter's, p. 73. ²Ibid. p. 73.

³Hist. of Middlesex and Union Counties, 1882, p. 572.

⁴Docs. Relating to the Colonial Hist. of N. J., Vol. 25, p. 317.

The ready and easy conveyance of letters and goods by water or by land to Philadelphia, N. Y. and other parts is another peculiar advantage it enjoys: and in a religious view, exceeds any other place in the province, having divine worship performed in the English Episcopal, Dutch Reformed, and Presbyterian Churches, and as to the inhabitants, with regard to their manners and other social virtues, compared with other places, without prejudice may be said to be irreproachable.

Moses Bloomfield, Secretary."

Note the proud boast in regard to religion, that the town of Woodbridge "exceeds any other place in the province!"

The year 1769² has always been regarded as an important one in the history of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, and rightly so, for in that year a Royal Charter was granted to the Parish by the Colonial Representative of King George III. This Charter is in the possession of the Parish today (1935), and it is of more than passing interest to remark that the parish continues to this day to operate under this ancient Royal Charter of 1769. It was during this year, also, that the Rev. Mr. Preston took charge officially of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, although he appears to have ministered there before. Perhaps it was due to his suggestion that a Charter was sought — and through his influence with the Governor (William Franklin, son to Benjamin Franklin) that it was obtained, on December 6th of that year (1769). Two days before, the Journal of the Governor of the Province and his Council shows that "His Excellency laid before the Board the Draught of a Charter of a Charter for incorporating 'The Minister, Church Wardens, and Vestry of Trinity Church in Woodbridge' which was read and approved, and the Council advised His Excellency to cause the Great Seal to be affixed to the Said Charter."³ The next day, December fifth, Cort. Skinner, Esq., perused the Charter and found "nothing therein Contained inconsistent with his Majesty's Honor or Interest" and stated so over his signature.

The Charter grants the Minister, Church Wardens and Vestry considerable powers — and ordains that they shall meet at the Church every year on Tuesday in Easter Week, and then and there elect two Church Wardens and not more than ten Vestry Men. When the Charter was granted the Rev. John Preston was the Minister, Samuel Jaques⁴ and Samuel Tingley were the Church Wardens, and David Alston,⁵ Esq., Thomas Hadden, Joseph Donham, and Ebenezer Forster, the Vestry Men.

In 1770 Mr. Preston wrote that his regular institution as Minister of the Parish in Woodbridge was deemed advisable

¹Docs. Relating to the Colonial Hist. of N. J., Vol. 26, p. 75.

²During this year (until Mr. Preston formally took charge) the Rev. Abraham Beach "preached once a month on a weekday at Woodbridge and performed other parochial duties." S. P. G. "B" MSS, Vol. 24, p. 303, Congressional Library.

³Docs. Relating to the Col. Hist. of N. J., Vol. 18, p. 30.

⁴He died May 1, 1780, aged 72, and was buried in Trinity Church yard.

⁵We know that his son, John Alston, died April 1, 1772, and was buried in the Churchyard.

that he might more fittingly present a claim for a proper portion of the 200 acre glebe set aside by the Proprietors in 1669. The following letter, of February 19th, 1770, shows that he felt it best, however, to delay action in the matter.

"Mr. Preston to the Secretary
(Extract)

Perth Amboy, N Jersey.

"In the country nigh to the town, the dissenters are very numerous, and in Woodbridge, the other part of the Mission, the Church Party is by much the smallest number, consisting of about 14 Families.

That township is of several miles extent and is pretty well settled, so that I cannot as yet guess at the no. of its inhabitants, but they are chiefly Presbyterians or Dissenters. However every third Sunday when I officiate there the congregation is pretty numerous and those Sundays I am here Mr. Gingley (or Bingley or Tingley), one of the Wardens of that Church, a regular well disposed man reads the prayers and a sermon of some of our approved authors by which means he keeps the congregation together and prevents them from frequenting the neighbouring conventicles; upon my first meeting of the vestry of Woodbridge they were earnest with me to take induction tho there are no temporalities belonging to the Church but they have a claim for a Glebe of above 200 acres of land which the Presbyterians are in possession of and they are anxious that the right should be determined by a course of Law. I said that the predecessor Mr. McKean had acquainted the Society of this matter for among his papers I got a letter from you to him enclosing a state of the case with the opinion of counsel in England upon it, but there is no direction in that for him to prosecute it, if there were I should think myself obliged to push it on; but in the present situation of affairs on this continent where men's minds are still agitated both with political and ecclesiastical disputes, when they have been made to apprehend the most dismal consequences even to their property from the coming of a Bishop among them a suit of that kind now would tend to influence and make a noise.

My endeavours therefore shall be if the Society does not determine it otherwise to keep the vestry quiet if possible and let our claim be dormant till a more favourable opportunity, and people are grown a little cooler so as to be able to distinguish that a trial of a matter of right is not an attack upon their principles which I am afraid would hardly be the case at present."

The death of James Parker was a sad blow to the Church at Woodbridge. Only six years before he had written that the chief workers at Trinity Church "being old, can't hope long to continue."² He died on July 2nd, 1770, at Burlington. He had been for several years Postmaster at New York, and when death overtook him was Comptroller and Secretary of the Post Office for the Northern District of the British Colonies. His father was Samuel Parker of Woodbridge, where James was born in 1714.³

A newspaper extract,⁴ dated July 5th, 1770, states: "Mr. Parker has carried on the Printing Business, chiefly in New York and sometimes in New Jersey for about 30 years, and was eminent in his profession. He possessed a sound judgment and extensive knowledge. He was industrious in Business,

¹Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, p. 664.

²See his letter quoted above, pp. 38-39.

³Parker, Hist. Sketches of N. J. Parishes, 1889.

⁴Docs. relating to Col. Hist. of N. J. Vol. 27, pp. 195-196.

upright in his Dealings, charitable to the Distressed, and has left a fair character, on which we have neither Time nor Room to enlarge." Mr. Parker's remains were attended for five miles outside of Burlington by a large number of the gentlemen who resided there, and met by a similar group outside of Perth Amboy who attended the body to Woodbridge, where a numerous congregation gathered at his house.¹ At six o'clock he was laid to rest besides his parents in the Meeting House Yard, the service being performed by the Reverend Mr. Preston, Rector of Trinity Church, Woodbridge.

Mr. Preston wrote of the work at Woodbridge to the Secretary of the S. P. G. on March 19th, 1771, and reported having christened 6 and buried 5 at that Mission.

(Extract)

Perth Amboy
New Jersey

"In Woodbridge (I have) christened 6, burials 5. The difference of no. of these duties is great between the two places (i. e. Woodbridge and Perth Amboy), tho the one is 5 times as large as the other being 16 miles in length and 12 in breadth but the one is an old established Mission the other but a late one. Since my last I have been through the greatest part of that district for a new country it is thickly settled and a great no. of inhabitants. I made it my business to visit all those who profess themselves of the Church Party at their own houses, those of the other persuasions I frequently review myself in their way and enter into conversation with them, and if they ask me into their houses I commonly accept of the invitation. This part of the Mission occasions a great deal more trouble than the other because they are more scattered and travelling is very troublesome both in hot and cold weather; for we have both in extremes, and yet notwithstanding the people of Woodbridge never have contributed anything to the support of their missionary."²

This backwardness to contribute to the support of a clergyman has always retarded the progress of the Church's work at Woodbridge.

The officers of the Society must have censured him about the slowness of the growth at Woodbridge, for a year later he wrote to the Secretary as follows:

(Extract)

Perth Amboy
March 10, 1772.

"I was likewise in hopes that there would have been a very large congregation at Woodbridge, for first when I went to there, the Church was always crowded, but now the novelty of the preacher is worn off, and their curiosity abated so that we have few, but who profess themselves of the Church Party, except on those days that they have no meeting (and that is every other Sunday) and then the audience is still pretty numerous."³

In 1774 the controversy with the Presbyterians over the ownership of the land which had been set aside for Church purposes in 1669 was agitated again. Mr. Preston wrote to the Secretary to acquaint the Society of the progress of the dispute:

Perth Amboy, New Jersey.
April 2, 1774.

Rev. Sir—

When I came to this Mission in the yr. 1769 the people of Woodbridge were desirous that I should commence law suit against the Presbyterians for 200 acres of land which upon the first settling of this Province were granted to build a Church on for a Church yard and a Glebe, but there being then few members of the Church of England here and no clergyman, the dissenters laid hold of it and have kept possession of it ever since. At that time I did not think it prudent to begin a law suit because peoples minds were too much inflamed with the dispute of bringing a Bishop into America, but that being now pretty well subsided I have consulted several lawyers upon the validity of our claim, who are all of opinion that we have a right to it and would recover it. My predecessor sent over a state of the case to the Society who took the opinion of Counsel in England upon it, which was also favourable unto us. However, I was averse of entering into a law suit, being sensible that it would disturb the harmony that at present subsists between the two parties and was for compromising matters, and prevailed upon the vestry to make them an offer of dividing it between us but they were in possession and thought they could hold it and would come into no terms. This nettled the vestry and they immediately proposed to raise a fund for the prosecution of it, and they are now busy in carrying about a subscription for that purpose."⁴

Then came the Revolutionary War which checked all legal proceedings.⁵

The inhabitants of Woodbridge met during the Fall and Winter of 1774-5 and selected a number of citizens to form a Committee of Observation and to deal with matters relating to the disturbing events of the day. Ebenezer Foster, a vestryman of Trinity Church, (and one of those mentioned in the Charter of 1769 in that capacity) was chosen on the above committee, and also to serve on the County Board of Correspondence.⁶ He was already a Trustee of the Free Schools of the Township, a Justice of the Peace, a Judge of the Court of Oyer and Terminer of the County, and a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of the County. His sympathies, however, were with the British, and in 1775 he was arrested as a sympathizer, and when he escaped and fled to Staten Island, his property was confiscated and in 1779 advertised to be sold.

Another Charter member of the Trinity Church Corporation was Thomas Hadden, who became a Captain in the 1st Regiment of Middlesex Militia, then Major, and in April 1778 was commissioned Lieutenant Colonel. He resigned in December of that year.⁷

The British occupied Woodbridge from December 2nd, 1776 to June 22nd, 1777.⁸ During the latter year Trinity Church was occasionally used as a soldiers' barracks.⁹ During the years of the War services at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, were almost, but not entirely abandoned, as was the case in

¹Parker, Hist. sketches of N. J. Parishes, 1889.
³Hawks MSS, Volume New Jersey, p. 695.

²Hawks MSS, Volume New Jersey, p. 684.

¹Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, pp. 698-699.

²Dally, Hist. of Woodbridge, pp. 133-134.

³Hist. Middlesex Co., 1921, p. 87.

⁴Documents Relating to the Col. Hist. of N. J., Vol. 3 (Second Series), p. 452.

⁵Hist. of Middlesex Co., (3 Vols.) 1921, p. 83.

⁶Ibid., p. 408.

many other places. The Church edifice appears to have come in for some damage from cannon, as a later writer reports that the shingled sides of the building still bore the marks of Revolutionary Cannon-balls.¹

The old house of Jonathan Dunham (which has been the Rectory since 1872) was used during the Revolutionary War as a small fort under the command of David Coddington and his men.²

On May 1, 1777, Mr. Preston writes to England that his Woodbridge congregation is scattered by the War, and that his mission no longer remains. He also tells of his plans to leave Perth Amboy and rejoin the 26th Regiment, of which he is Chaplain.

"For it has brought great part of the Rebel army all around us and to prevent the garrison from drawing any subsistence from the country they have laid all waste, so that the inhabitants of Woodbridge which is part of this Mission have been obliged to fly, nay several of their houses have been burnt. — The King's troops are preparing to take the field. — As I should be left without a congregation if I remain here and run great danger in being made a prisoner I propose leaving this and joining the 26th Reg. of which I am the Chaplain. So if the Society have any directions to send me they will know how to forward them."³

Before his departure from Perth Amboy Mr. Preston was censured on one occasion for using prayers in the service for the King. He was warned not to do so again on the following Sunday, or he would be punished. He quaintly left town before Sunday, and returned again after the hour of service was past.⁴

Mr. Preston withdrew from Perth Amboy in 1777, and thus ceased to care for the Churches in that town and in Woodbridge. He died on March 11, 1781, at Shrewsbury, N. J., while continuing to serve the 26th Regiment as Chaplain.⁵

After Mr. Preston's removal (1777) we know definitely of only one other occasion when Woodbridge received the ministrations of a Priest of the Church during the remainder of the War. That was a visit paid by the Reverend Dr. Abraham Beach, the Society's Missionary at New Brunswick, who at one stage of the War was the only Priest of the Church in the entire province. In a letter he wrote to the Secretary of the S. P. G. from New Brunswick in March 24, 1780, he says that since he last wrote, which was on July 4, 1778, he has been at Woodbridge and "baptized 2."⁶ Whether Dr. Beach made other visits before the War ended, we do not know.

¹Riley Memorial Biography of Dean Hoffman, 1904, p. 384.

²According to the reminiscences of 87 year old Jonas Coddington, his grandson, as reported in a local newspaper in 1922.

³Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, p. 736.

⁴Ibid., pp. 723-725 (A letter to the Secretary of the S. P. G. written by Mr. Preston from Perth Amboy on January 2nd, 1777.)

⁵Jones, Hist. of St. Peter's p. 79.

⁶Hawks MSS, New Jersey Volume, p. 741; and Clark's Hist. of St. John's, Eliz., pp. 158-159.

It should be noted, however, that before Dr. Beach left New Jersey he wrote two letters¹ to the Secretary of the S. P. G. (Letters which have only recently been discovered in an old box hidden away in the storeroom of the S. P. G.) which indicate that he did contrive to minister to the Church at Woodbridge until his departure for New York in 1784. On October 30, 1783 he wrote: "Since my letter of October 1, 1782² I have baptized — at Woodbridge — 1." and on May 17, 1784 he wrote to the Secretary of the Society that he was still ministering to the nearby mission stations to the best of his ability.

Up to this time the Church in Woodbridge had depended almost entirely upon the generosity of the S. P. G. and its unselfish Missionaries, having contributed practically nothing to the support of the work, except the erecting of the two church buildings. By the withdrawal of the S. P. G.'s support at the close of the Revolution, Woodbridge was left to stand upon its own feet — and it hadn't learned how during the many years of its protracted infancy, so it fell down — and did not rise until a number of discouraging years had passed.

¹Photostat copies are in the Division of Manuscripts of the Congressional Library at Washington.

²In that letter Dr. Beach had written: "At Woodbridge I have officiated twice on a weekday and baptized Three Adults and Four Children." S. P. G. "B" MSS, Vol. 24, Page 311.

PART II
FROM THE CLOSE OF
THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR
TO THE PRESENT
1783 to 1935

CHAPTER VII

The Second Period of Decline: 1783-1810

No document or other evidence has been preserved which sheds any clear light upon the years between Dr. Abraham Beach's visit (referred to in his letter of 1783) and the meeting of the Sixth Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New Jersey, held in St. John's Church, Elizabeth Town, from June 3rd to 5th, 1789. At this Convention one of the lay delegates present was Mr. Samuel Jaques, representing "Trinity Church, Woodbridge."¹ That there was still a lively interest in the Church among the people of Woodbridge is shown by the fact that they ordered ten copies of the Published Proceedings (Convention Journal) when the largest number to be ordered was twenty by Newark's inhabitants.

During the next two decades scarcely a year passes that Trinity Church, Woodbridge, is not found to have at least one lay delegate at the Diocesan Convention. In 1790 the Convention was held in St. Michael's Church at Trenton on June 2nd and 3rd. Mr. Thomas Heath represented the Parish of Woodbridge, which parish agreed to take five copies of the "Proceedings". Perhaps difficulty had been experienced in disposing of the ten copies of the previous issue.

Trinity Church, Newark, was the scene of the 1791 Convention and Mr. Samuel Jaques attended from Woodbridge. Six copies of the "Proceedings" were taken this year.

At the Convention of 1792, held at Christ Church, New Brunswick, which Mr. Thomas Heath of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, attended, a list of all the parishes in the Diocese that were destitute of clergy was given. Trinity, Woodbridge, was not included on the list, so we may assume that in some manner or other the Church in that town was being cared for by a nearby clergyman. The question naturally arises "Who?"

We know that Dr. Abraham Beach, while missionary at New Brunswick, ministered at Woodbridge during the years 1778-1782. From 1782 to 1784 Dr. Beach was Rector of St. Peter's Church, Perth Amboy, a parish only one third the distance from Woodbridge that New Brunswick is. This double fact makes it reasonable to suppose that he continued to look out for the Church at Woodbridge, now that he could do this so much more conveniently. That he did so at least during the year 1783 we know from his letter of that year.²

¹From this year of 1789 to the present (1935) much of the material for this "History of Trinity Church, Woodbridge," has been obtained from the Diocesan Journals and Convention Proceedings, all of which are on file at the Diocesan House in Trenton, New Jersey.

²See above, page 47.

His two immediate successors at St. Peter's were the Reverend John Hamilton Rowland (Rector 1784-1787) and the Reverend George Hartwell Spieren (Rector 1788-1790). It seems possible, even likely, that they too continued generously the practice of giving occasional attention to the needs of the flock at Woodbridge. There would seem but little doubt that the members of the Church in Woodbridge often went to Perth Amboy to attend services at St. Peter's.

From 1791 to 1795 the Reverend Henry Van Dyke, D. D., was Rector of St. Peter's and of Christ Church, New Brunswick, as well. The Convention of 1792 which did not list Trinity Church, Woodbridge, as destitute of the services of a clergyman took place during his rectorate, and it would seem most likely that it was he who was looking after the faithful in Woodbridge at that time.

The Convention of 1793 was held at distant St. Mary's, Burlington, but Mr. Thomas Heath of Trinity Church attended and his name appears first on the list of laity present. That Trinity Church, Woodbridge, through her laity, was taking an active and important part in the life of the diocese is attested by the following quotation from the "Proceedings" of 1793:

"On the application of the congregation of St. Peter's Church Spottswood, relative to some causes of dissention between them and the clergyman of that church, Resolved, that the Rev. Mr. Waddell and the Rev. Mr. Van Dyke of the clergy, and Messieurs Morford and Heath of the laity, be a committee to visit that Church within six weeks from this time, and after enquiring into the circumstances of the dispute, recommend some plan of accommodation between the parties, and report the same to the next convention."

Both Samuel Jaques and Thomas Heath were present at the Convention held in St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, in 1794. At that time the committee (including Mr. Heath) appointed the year before to deal with the difficulties of the Church in Spottswood, made a report which was read and filed.

No delegate from Trinity Church, Woodbridge, attended the Conventions of 1795 and 1797, but Mr. Jaques was present in 1796, and Woodbridge took 12 copies of the Proceedings of that Convention—double the number which had been taken during the past five years.

The Convention of 1798 was held at Newark, June 7th and 8th, then adjourned to New Brunswick on August 15th and 16th. Samuel Jaques and Thomas Heath were both present at Newark, and the former also at New Brunswick. At the latter part of this Convention the Rev. Uzal Ogden, Rector of Trinity Church, Newark, was elected Bishop of New Jersey, and Samuel Jaques signed the certificate of election as the representative of Trinity Church, Woodbridge.

From 1793 to 1803 the Rev. Dr. Richard Channing Moore, later Bishop of Virginia, was Rector of St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, and no doubt ministered at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, from time to time.

At the Diocesan Convention of 1799, the Rev. Dr. Ogden of Newark, the Bishop-Elect, reported that during the past two years he had visited and officiated at several places including Trinity Church, Woodbridge, and that he had also baptized several children at these places. Mr. Thomas Heath was present, and also attended the Special Convention held in Perth Amboy in October, to deal with the dispute which had arisen out of Dr. Ogden's election to the Episcopate. Three questions were voted upon: (1) that the priests who voted in 1798 were qualified; (2) that the priests were resident; and (3) that the said election was regular in every respect. Then the Resolution that the Standing Committee should take measures to effect the speedy consecration of the Bishop-Elect was voted upon. Trinity Church, Woodbridge, voted in the affirmative on each of the three votes, and upon the Resolution.

Mr. Thomas Heath was present at the Convention of 1801 as the Woodbridge delegate.

Dr. Ogden, at the Convention of 1802, reported preaching at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, during the past year. This is the second time that Dr. Ogden has reported performing services at Woodbridge, and he similarly reported at the next Convention (1803), at which Mr. Heath again represented the Parish.

Beginning in 1804, the Convention made a practise each year of assigning men to take occasional services at vacant churches. "Agreeably to the 11th article of the ordinance for supporting missionaries, etc." the Convention proceeded to designate to each minister, the vacant churches he is to officiate at during the ensuing year: the Rev. Dr. Ogden, at Christ Church, Pompton, and at Trinity Church, Woodbridge; the Revd. Mr. Jones at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, and at St. James, Piscataway.

Mr. Thomas Heath attended this Convention in June, and also the Special Convention called in December to deal with the dispute which had arisen between Dr. Ogden and Trinity Church, Newark.

The Reverend Mr. Jones referred to in the assignments to vacant parishes was the Rev. Jasper Davis Jones, who had just become Rector of St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, where he remained until May 1809. He was designated to officiate at Trinity Church, Woodbridge by each one of the Conventions from 1804 to 1808 inclusive (he left the Diocese before the Convention of 1809). Mr. Jones appears to have performed his duties at Woodbridge. He reported to the Convention of 1807 "that he had performed Divine Service once at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, and therein collected \$2.20 for the Missionary Fund." The following year he reported that he had preached etc. at Trinity Church on April 20, 1808, and had

baptized 2 children there. Mr. Thomas Heath,¹ the faithful delegate from Woodbridge, was late in arriving at this Convention, but he "presented his testimonials, and was admitted to a seat."

In the Convention of 1809 "the next incumbent at Perth Amboy (Mr. Jones had just left and Mr. Chapman was soon to arrive) was designated to take a service on a Sunday at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, and Rev. Messrs. Croes² and Rudd³ also as often as convenient." Woodbridge was given two copies of the Journal, the smallest number of any church in the Diocese.

Indeed, Trinity Church was almost dead. The Church building had never been repaired since receiving desecrating treatment in the Revolutionary War—and with only rare visits by clergymen, it was small wonder that the future of the parish appeared hopeless.

At the Convention of 1810 the new Rector of St. Peter's in Perth Amboy, the Reverend James Chapman, Deacon, reported that he had "made an appointment to conduct a service at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, but was prevented by unfavourable weather from attending."

"A Comparative View of the State of the Congregations, comprising the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of New Jersey for 3 years ending May 30, 1810" stated the following about Trinity Church, Woodbridge: "Vacant. This congregation is reduced to a low ebb, and the Church is in a ruinous state." The reading of this report to the Convention of 1810 seems to have spurred the members to action: "On motion of the Rev. Mr. Rudd, resolved that a committee be appointed to advise with and aid the Vestry of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, relative to the securing of the property belonging to the congregation, and the repairing of this Church, and that this committee consist of the Rev. Messrs. Croes and Chapman, and Andrew Bell and Joseph March, Esqrs." The Convention further designated the Rev. Mr. Chapman to officiate at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, on one Sunday, and the Rev. Mr. John Croes, jun.,⁴ on week days at the same place.

Trinity Church, Woodbridge, had for years been sinking into a deplorable state—but was destined soon to get a new lease of life, thus repeating the history of the years from 1725 to 1775. Right up to the present day, the history of this long-suffering parish has been one of continual "ups and downs", and there has never been in the history of the entire 237 years a period of even a dozen consecutive years of success and prosperity measured by whatever standard one might choose.

¹He died in 1810, and on Sept. 24th of that year the Rev. Mr. Chapman of St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, records the addition to his list of communicants of a "Mrs. Heath of Woodbridge". See Jones, p. 154.

²Rev. John Croes, Rector of Christ Church, New Brunswick; later First Bishop of New Jersey.

³Rev. John C. Rudd, Rector of St. John's Church, Elizabeth; a successor of Dr. T. B. Chandler.

⁴Son of the Right Reverend John Croes, the First Bishop of New Jersey.

CHAPTER VIII

The Gradual Growth from 1810 to 1829

The action of the Convention of 1810 proved to be an important turning point in the life of Trinity Church, Woodbridge. The Committee got to work at once with splendid results as is shown by the following report which was presented to the Convention of 1811:

"The committee, appointed by the late convention of the Church in New Jersey, to advise with and aid the Vestry of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, relative to the securing the property belonging to the Congregation, and the repairing of the Church, beg leave to report,

"That, by the blessing of the great Head of the Church on their undertaking, and by means of the liberal contributions of the pious and benevolent, they have seen their work crowned with a success which has far exceeded the expectations which they had entertained, when they first entered upon it. Shortly after their appointment, the committee together with the Vestry, held a meeting at the Church, to examine what repairs were necessary, and to devise means for defraying the expenses, which would occur in making them. They were happy to find that at the time in which they entered upon the discharge of this duty, Mr. Daniel Terrill one of the Vestry of Trinity Church, was zealously engaged in the same object. He offered to take upon himself the whole trouble of soliciting donations and the principal superintendence of the repairs, which offer was gratefully accepted. To these objects, he has, with a laudable zeal, devoted the greater part of his time and attention, since June last. At the beginning of the winter, the church was sufficiently completed for public worship, and accordingly it was opened for that purpose on the Festival of St. John the Evangelist, Dec. 27, 1810. Divine service was performed by the Reverend Mr. Chapman, and a sermon appropriate to the occasion, delivered by the Rev. Mr. Rudd to a full congregation* (*The Rev. Mr. Croes, of New Brunswick, was prevented by sickness from attending on this occasion). Since December the Church has been completely finished, and is now rendered a neat and convenient place of worship. The expenses of the repairs, together with filling in, ceiling and plastering the church, which had not been done before, amount to 500 dollars, as nearly as can be ascertained. Thus the committee have the high satisfaction of reporting that a church, which was truly in a ruinous and forlorn condition, is not only saved from destruction, but brought into a more finished state than it ever had been. Of the zeal, industry, and perseverance, manifested by Mr. Terrill, the committee cannot speak in too high terms. The gratitude of all the friends of our venerable church is due to him, not only for his exertions in the present instance, but for the new proof, which he has given of what may be done, by proper exertions, towards restoring those churches, which are already in ruins; and reviving the interests of those that are declining.

Respecting the property belonging to the congregation, the committee report that the vestry are taking measures for the collecting of debts due to it; and that the land attached to the Church, is rendered completely secure by the repairs which have been made, and the re-establishment of divine service in it.

The committee conclude, with requesting that the thanks of the Convention be given to Mr. Daniel Terrill, for his zealous and indefatigable exertions in this important undertaking

John Croes J. Chapman
Joseph Marsh Andrew Bell"

It would seem, however, that the committee fell down on the most important aspect of the task: that of making adequate provision for services in the reconditioned Church in Woodbridge. They performed a fine piece of work in getting the Church repaired, but without regular priestly ministrations, the Church's condition was similar to that of a school-house without a teacher. The committee had failed to get at the very cause of the Church's ruinous condition. Monthly or even quarterly services according to a regular schedule would have been a vast improvement over the irregular services held when a neighboring priest was moved to perform his task of one service which had been laid upon him by the Annual Diocesan Convention.

The Reverend Mr. Chapman visited Woodbridge on Sunday, July 22nd, 1810, about six weeks after the 1810 Convention, and officiated in the Academy (the church not then being in a fit condition for divine service). The Vestry appears to have been well organized at this time (and were even prior to the granting of the Royal Charter in 1769), for Dally (writing in 1872) states that in 1810 the "Wardens were Daniel Terrill and David Brown, and the Vestrymen Barry Strangman, William P. Terrill, Elias Marsh, John Jaques, James Smith, Alston Bishop, and Edward Munday. Thomas Barron was Clerk." And Dally gives as his reference: "Trinity Church Records, page 1." The records to which he refers have since been lost, but the fact that the first page of the records dealt with the year 1810 seems to indicate that a new start was made in that year. The Reverend Mr. Chapman, the Rector of Perth Amboy, from his closeness to the situation, was probably the man who got things started again after the preceding "bad years", aided no doubt by the active and zealous Daniel Terrill, Esq.

Although he had been assigned only one Sunday by the Convention to officiate during the year, he officiated twice more: on Sunday June 6th and again on April 28th. He reported that the congregation on the last mentioned day was very large, as it was also on Thursday, April 18th, when the Rev. David Moore of Staten Island officiated there. The Rev. John Croes, jun., was prevented by storms from officiating at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, when he had planned to do so.

During this year Mr. Chapman gave the Church a fine folio Prayer Book published in New York in 1795, one of the early Prayer Books of our Church in the United States. This Book is still in the possession of the Parish. It is inscribed: "This book was presented to Trinity Church in Woodbridge, August 4th, 1811, by the Rev. J. Chapman, Rector of St. Peter's Church, in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

It would prove tedious to enumerate in detail each of the isolated visits which Trinity Church, Woodbridge, received

¹Dally, Hist. of Woodbridge, p. 134.

from the clergy of the Diocese year by year, until the Reverend William Douglas took charge in 1829. During the twenty years from 1809 to 1829 no less than fourteen different clergy were charged with the care of the feeble church at Woodbridge.

Scarcely a year passed of the twenty that the Rev. James Chapman didn't officiate at least once at Woodbridge.¹ The Rev. John Croes of Christ Church, New Brunswick, officiated in 1810, and then after his consecration to the Episcopate (1815), he visited the parish almost every year. The Rev. John C. Rudd, Rector of St. John's Church, Elizabeth, conducted many services at Trinity Church during the decade 1810-1819, in one year (1816) holding as many as seven services. The Rev. Daniel Higbee, Missionary to the Vacant Parishes in the Diocese, officiated in Woodbridge during the years 1812-1814. Lewis P. Bayard, a Deacon, officiated in 1813, as did the Rev. George Y. Morehouse in 1815-1816. During these same three years a certain candidate for Holy Orders, Mr. John Cook, was assigned to lay read at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, but he conducted himself in a manner unworthy of his calling and was repudiated by the Convention in 1816.

In 1815 Trinity Church was reported as "Vacant; Families and contributors—15; Communicants—5; Baptisms 3 (2 Adults; 1 Infant)." When Bishop Croes preached there in 1817 he found a "respectable and attentive audience, assembled in a building, neat and in excellent repair." In that same year the Rev. Samuel C. Stratton, of Mullica's Hill, succeeded Mr. Higbee as Missionary to the Vacant Parishes of the Diocese, and so was partly responsible for the care of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, during 1817-1818. In the latter year the Rev. Francis H. Cumming, who had been a lay delegate from the Woodbridge Parish to the Convention of 1815, was ordained Deacon. This is the first instance we have of the Parish contributing a member to the ministry. He officiated several times in his home parish during the winter of 1818-1819.²

The Rev. Clarkson Dunn, Deacon, minister at Christ Church, Newton, and St. James' Church, Knowlton, in Sussex County, succeeded Mr. Stratton in the care of the Vacant Parishes, and faithfully and regularly officiated at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, throughout the decade: 1819-1828³ even after he had ceased to be Diocesan Missionary. He reports in 1820:

¹The total number of services conducted by clergymen reported throughout the twenty years were as follows:

1809—0	1813—6	1817—2	1821—6	1825—8
1810—2	1814—3	1818—6	1822—5	1826—12
1811—6	1815—5	1819—4	1823—4	1827—6
1812—4	1816—9	1820—3	1824—8	1828—5

²He transferred to the Diocese of New York in 1820, in which year he was ordained Priest by Bishop Hobart. He appears to have spent the rest of his ministry in that Diocese, being Rector of St. Luke's, Rochester, 1822-1832, and in 1835 was Rector of Immanuel Church, New York City, from: James Parker, "Sketches of the Parishes—in N. J., 1889, p. 117. ³He missed only one year: 1825.

"This Church has been generally opened on Sundays for divine services, during the last year. In consequence of which, the responses are made much better than formerly, and the number of attendants has considerably increased."

One year later the Bishop's report is not so optimistic as to the immediate future of the parish at Woodbridge. He says in his Address: "This Church, small and necessarily vacant, though risen from a state that threatened its total extinction, and though possessed of a building neatly and substantially repaired, yet promises but little as to any such increase of its numbers, for many years, as shall enable it to support a minister."

The Reverend John M. Ward, Deacon, of St. Mary's Church, Colestown, began his duties as Missionary to the Vacant Churches of the Diocese in 1822, and visited Woodbridge in that year and also in 1824 and 1825. In 1822 the Parish gave \$13.51 for Missionary work as compared with \$2.29 only eight years before; thus some progress can be noted.

In 1823 another Diocesan Missionary was appointed: the Rev. Robert B. Croes, and he officiated at Trinity, Woodbridge, several times in that year. During 1824-1825 a third clergyman by the name of Croes, the Reverend John Croes, junior, (son of the Bishop of the Diocese) ministered to the faithful at Woodbridge. The Reverend Charles Smith became Diocesan Missionary in 1825, but was forced to resign because of bad health after a short time. Before giving up the work, he had preached on three Sundays at Woodbridge. He was succeeded by the Rev. Benjamin Holmes, who seems to have given Trinity Church a good deal of his time during the years 1825-1827, having preached no less than eight times in one year.

This brings to a close the too-long period in which Trinity Church, Woodbridge, received no regular clerical ministrations, but only those of occasional visiting clergymen.

CHAPTER IX

Another Cycle of Growth and Decay: 1829-1858

Trinity Church, Woodbridge, took a new lease on life in 1829¹ when the Reverend William Douglas took joint charge of the Parish together with Saint James' Church, Piscataway, residing at the latter place.² Mr. Douglas had but lately come from England, where he had been a priest in good standing, as evidenced from his testimonials, which were readily accepted by the Diocese.

This was the first time since the Revolution that Trinity Church had received constant and regular ministrations, and from this date forward the Parish grew stronger and larger, in spite of subsequent periods of decay. Mr. Douglas appears to have conducted services at Woodbridge regularly once a month. He reported in 1831 that the congregation, though small, "had put the building together with the fence of the graveyard into a state of comfortable repair." Mr. Douglas received only \$25.00 a year for his labours at Woodbridge, this coming from the Diocesan Missionary Fund.

He gave a most encouraging report on Trinity, Woodbridge, in 1832:

(From the Convention Journal) "Mr. Douglas reports that the prospect of the congregation of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, is somewhat encouraging. Since July last, divine service has been performed there regularly on Sunday afternoons with the exception of every sixth Sunday which was devoted to the congregation of St. Thomas's Church, Alexandria; and altho the congregation has sustained the loss by removal of a large and respectable family, yet does it not appear to be diminished in number. The Lord's Supper has been twice administered in this congregation within the last six months, and it is truly gratifying to state that there are now six communicants. Since the last report this church has been thoroughly repaired and painted and is now a comfortable place of worship."

It is particularly gratifying to learn that at last Trinity Parish is enjoying the blessing of weekly services conducted by a clergyman (excepting every sixth Sunday).

Bishop Croes died July 30th, 1832, at the age of 70. The Rev. Mr. Douglas took part in electing his successor: the Reverend George Washington Doane, on October 3rd.

The number of bona fide members of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, remained disappointingly small, consisting only of three or four families and half-a-dozen communicants. Mr. Douglas reports in 1835 "This congregation, though still very

¹From this date onward documents and records of the Parish, and still in the possession of the Parish, shed light upon its history, as well as the Diocesan Convention Journals from 1789 to 1934.

²A year later he also took charge of St. Thomas' Church, Alexandria.

small, is I think improving. The members, though few in number, are people of truly Christian piety and laudable zeal. May their number be increased one hundred fold! This Church has been open for divine service as usual on Sunday afternoons; also on Fourth of July, Christmas Day, and Good Friday.

During this year (1835) the Parish made its first recorded contribution to Foreign Missions: a gift of 61c to African Missions. Two years later \$6.37 was sent to the Mission in Persia.

For a time during the year 1836, the Reverend Alfred E. Ford, Deacon, in charge of St. Paul's Church, Rahway, officiated at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, as Mr. Douglas' assistant. The latter particularly praises the ladies of the Parish for their unremitting efforts for the Church generally, and especially in getting the edifice repaired, the interior and exterior whitewashed, "the Communion furnished with a pitcher of Britannia ware, and two plates of German silver" with "Trinity Church, Woodbridge" engraved on them. "They have also procured blinds for the windows and a carpet for the chancel. A Sunday School¹ has been opened, but the number of children in attendance is small; indeed there are but few to attend, and the residence of the missionary being remote from this Church, prevents in some degree, his devoting so much time to it as he could wish."

The first Confirmation service in Trinity Church, Woodbridge, of which there is any record is that which occurred on Sunday afternoon, October 30th, 1836, when Bishop Doane at the time of his Visitation confirmed two. It is probable that hitherto any who were confirmed from Trinity Church were confirmed at a nearby place (as St. Peter's in Perth Amboy).

The Reverend William Douglas resigned the Rectorate sometime after June 2nd, 1837. On May 30th, 1838, the Reverend Frederick Ogilby, a recently ordained alumnus of the General Theological Seminary, who had been conducting occasional services, made the following report to the Diocesan Convention:

"This Parish has had no regular services since the resignation of the Rev. Mr. Douglas. A clergyman (the Rev. Frederick Ogilby, by whom this report is made) residing in the vicinity, has been enabled to render occasional services during the week (on the Festival and Fast days) and to perform pastoral duty.

Notwithstanding the irregularity of these services, and their occurrence on wk days the attendance has been very encouraging. The Communion has been twice administered to twelve communicants; six persons (1 adult) have been baptized; and thirteen families (together with some individuals) have subscribed their names with contributions to support the church in case they can be supplied with a missionary."

¹Seventeen enrolled the first Sunday, and in two years time there were 45, according to the original attendance book.

Mr. Ogilby resided in Rahway, and officiated as Assistant to the Rector of Grace Church in New York City. During the week he held services at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, where a new life was being imparted by his ministrations. Bishop Doane states in his Address that this "gives promise of excellent things for that long depressed church." Mr. Ogilby was instituted into the Rectorship of Trinity Parish on December 22nd, 1838, by Bishop Doane, at a salary of \$200 a year. He likewise became Rector of St. James' in Piscataway. His report in 1839 shows a truly encouraging state of affairs.

"These parishes (Woodbridge and Piscataway), the oldest missionary stations in the Diocese, have within the last year united in the choice of a Rector, and have connected with this a most important unanimity, a common determination, which has been acted upon, to do their best to support him. For several years past, these places have been under the care of the Rev. William Douglas, Missionary (now in Illinois) to whose faithful and unwearied discharge of duty, in the midst of every discouragement, many can witness; and who could well address the people in his charge, in the language of St. Paul to the Ephesians "Yea, ye yourselves know that these hands —."

Although not permitted to reap the immediate fruits of his diligence, he has the present reward of witnessing the measure of prosperity with which God has blessed these humble Parishes; which, but for his constancy and labours, would have been ere this, wholly extinct.

In Trinity Church, Woodbridge, the congregation gives good promise of soon outgrowing our present building, and thus giving one of the best arguments for erecting a new edifice, which is already contemplated.

Families—24; Communicants (added 10)—17; Baptisms—12; Funerals—3; Sunday School—under the superintendence of the Rector—teachers, 6; pupils 55; books, above 100.

A handsome fence, costing nearly \$300, has been erected around the Church grounds. The Rector has caused upwards of 150 trees to be planted in the yards of the two Churches."

That the building of a new Church was seriously considered at this time is also shown by the following Document which was circulated, but which either failed to elicit much response, or else was withdrawn from circulation, and the proposal abandoned for reasons unknown.

"Proposals

For a new church in Trinity Parish, Woodbridge.

—o—

The amount requisite for erecting a neat and commodious edifice is estimated at \$2500. It is considered certain that if \$1500 of this amount can be raised in the congregation and vicinity the remainder, viz \$1000, can be made up by foreign aid.

That the congregation may be more readily induced to contribute, their money will be asked, not as a donation, but as an investment. The whole amount will be portioned off into shares and half-shares, the former to consist of \$100, the latter of \$50 each. Every holder of a share, will, upon the completion of the church, be entitled to the property, as long as the edifice stands, of a pew among those assigned to the share-holders, the exact one to be decided by lot. In the same manner with those who hold half-shares. To the shares will

be attributed the first five rows of pews from the front backwards, the remainder shall be allotted to the half-shares. Each pew which is thus owned shall be subject to a rent equivalent to six per cent upon the whole amount of shares and ten per cent on that of half-shares. the money contributed must be paid in by installments according to the requisitions of the building committee.

In Accordance with the above plan, the subscribers hereby pledge themselves for the sums attached to their respective names.

Names	Shares
John M. Tufts	one
Rene Pardessus	one
George Brooks	one
George Claus	one"

A bass viol and a new stove and chimney were also procured at this time by parish subscriptions amounting to \$35. Mr. Ogilby received financial assistance from the Diocese to the extent of \$100 a year. This capable Rector must have been a favourite of Bishop Doane's, for we find frequent reference to him in the annual Bishop's Addresses to the Conventions as assisting him in many of his visitations throughout the Diocese. The Bishop says of him that through his efforts the old decayed church at Woodbridge begins to "arise and shine." In statistics this is revealed by the fact that in 1839 there were 14 baptisms, more than the total for the entire twenty years preceding!

When the Rector was forced to be absent for six months in 1840-1841, the Reverend Professor John Ogilby¹, the Rector's brother, and the Reverend Philip E. Milledoler, M. D., supplied his two Parishes. Mr. Ogilby resigned his Rectorship on January 1st, 1842 to become Assistant at St. Mary's Church in Burlington, where the Bishop was Rector.

It is possible that the resignation of Mr. Ogilby was the cause of the dropping of the project to build the new Church.

In 1842, the Reverend Hamble James Leacock became Rector of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, and of St. James' Church at Piscataway, on February 20th. On three Sundays of the month he had services in the morning at Trinity Church and at St. James in the afternoon; and on the Sunday when the Holy Eucharist was celebrated at Piscataway, the order was changed.

Mr. Leacock appears to have resided in Woodbridge, and thus was able to give much closer attention to the needs of Trinity Church than to the flock at Piscataway. He reports 21 Families and 20 Communicants and 24 Sunday School Scholars at Woodbridge; this was a considerable growth over the last report. In the summer and fall of 1842 the church building was thoroughly repaired and painted, new seats added, and a

¹The Reverend John Ogilby was St. Mark's in the Bowery Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the General Theological Seminary at New York. At one time we find him "Professor of Ancient Languages in Rutgers College, New Brunswick, a presbyter of the Diocese of New York", and generous in volunteering his services always.

vestry room built¹, the money having been subscribed by members of the parish.

Mr. Leacock had come to the Diocese of New Jersey in the summer of 1840 and settled on a farm beside the Raritan River near New Brunswick², until he accepted the call to Woodbridge. He remained as Rector of Trinity Church only one year, before going to St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, to succeed the venerable Reverend James Chapman, who had been serving God there steadily since 1810.

After leaving Perth Amboy in 1848, Mr. Leacock became leader of the West Indian Mission to West Africa, where he died of the fever in 1856, and has come to be known as "the Martyr of the Pongas."³

The Reverend James Chapman, dear and venerable saint, too old to continue as Rector of St. Peter's in Perth Amboy, gave the rest of his life from 1843 until his death in 1857, with but small compensation,⁴ to the flock at Woodbridge. Almost always he walked to Woodbridge and back from his residence in Amboy.

Trinity Church, Woodbridge, however, badly needed a young and active man who could spend much time and effort in building up the Parish, not an old saint who was patiently awaiting for death to bring him his heavenly reward. Thus the next fifteen years of the Parish's life were declining and disappointing ones. During that entire time he officiated at a total of only 19 Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals!⁵ Parishioners died and moved away, but there was no one active enough to bring in new members, and so the congregation grew smaller year by year. The blame should not rest upon the shoulders of the Reverend Mr. Chapman; he was giving of himself as generously as a man could; the Vestry of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, should have procured a more active priest to build up the parish!⁶

The annual reports for those fifteen years (1843-1857) make discouraging reading: only decay and growing hopelessness. Mr. Chapman himself feels this, but courageously says in 1853 that "it is doubtless well to take care of the things that remain, in hope of better things to come."

In his report for 1856 he tells of having been confined to his home in Perth Amboy by sickness, and thus having been prevented from ministering to Trinity Church in Woodbridge, which parish apparently went without any ministrations for the winter and spring months. Mr. Chapman died in April 1857.

¹Dally, Hist. of Woodbridge, pp. 133-134.

²Jones, Hist. of St. Peter's, p. 98. ³Ibid., pp. 97-100.

⁴In 1844 he received \$80, not a small sum for Trinity Parish in those days.

⁵His notebooks as recorded in Jones, Hist. of St. Peter's, pp. 172-177.

⁶On February 3rd, 1843, the Vestry of St. James' Church, Piscataway, called the Reverend George Ogle as Rector, and at the very same time communicated this fact to Trinity Church, Woodbridge, in the hopes, no doubt, that Trinity Vestry would do likewise and so continue the joint Rectorship arrangement which had worked satisfactorily before.

During the last months of the aged Rector's life, the Reverend H. N. Pierce, Rector of St. Paul's Church, Rahway, had been acting as missionary to the flock at Woodbridge until some other arrangement could be made.

After a few months of his efforts the Parish began to show signs of blooming again, and he was able to report 13 Families, 50 individuals and 13 communicants (as compared with 7 communicants at Mr. Chapman's last report). Mr. Pierce made this report to the Convention of May, 1857, at which time he is referred to as "Missionary at Trinity Church, Woodbridge." The Reverend William R. Earle soon began to assist Mr. Pierce at Woodbridge, and in the Journal of 1858 was termed "the Minister of Trinity Church, Woodbridge."

The stage was now set for two important events, which were destined to have a wonderfully revitalizing effect upon the Parish: the arrival of the Reverend E. A. Hoffman, Rector of Christ Church, Elizabeth, and the destruction of the Second Church by fire.

CHAPTER X

The Building of the Third Church

In February 1858 the Reverend Eugene Augustus Hoffman, Rector of Christ Church, Elizabeth, together with the help of his Assistant (the Rev. John Martin Henderson) had begun to hold regular services at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, each Sunday afternoon.

A month later, on the afternoon of Sunday, March 7th, 1858, Miss Sally Coddington and her sister, Mrs. Manning, were preparing the Church for the afternoon service. One was busy with the fire in the old stove, trying to get the church comfortably heated before service time, while the other was working about the chancel. Suddenly the roof caught fire from the chimney, and before the ice could be broken on the nearby creek and water brought to extinguish the flames, the whole building, which was of frame construction with shingled sides, was doomed. As no insurance was carried on the Church, it was practically a complete loss. \$25.14 was realized by the sale on March 31st of some of the old iron, odd bricks, charred beams, doors, boards, stove pipe, and even the ashes were purchased for the incredible sum of \$4.10. These few dollars were used as a nucleus for the building fund for a new church.

It would seem that a number of the people in Woodbridge who were Episcopalians had never truly appreciated their church until they no longer had it. Thus they were reawakened by the fire to a new zeal — and the enthusiasm with which efforts were made to raise money for rebuilding gave promise of a brighter future for the Parish.

The Vestry met on March 22nd and approved a plan for a new Church submitted by Mr. Upjohn, the well-known Church architect, the cost not to exceed \$2500. The Vestry also requested Bishop Doane to prepare a Pastoral Letter to be sent far and wide in the hopes that others would feel inclined to contribute towards the erection of the new church.

The Bishop of the Diocese acceded to the request and issued the following letter:

"A PASTORAL LETTER

To the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of New Jersey, in behalf of Trinity Church, Woodbridge.

—o—

Dear Brethren:

It has pleased God to afflict the little flock of Christ, at Woodbridge, by the destruction of their house of Prayer. Woodbridge was one of the earliest stations of the venerable society in England for the

propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts; and Trinity Church was among the oldest of our church edifices. The congregation was formed in the year of our Lord 1711, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Vaughan of Elizabethtown. It was among the stations visited by that veteran Missionary and faithful champion of the Church, the Rev. Dr. Chandler. A long line of faithful labourers have ministered there; among them Channing and Ogleby, and Rudd and Douglass, and Chapman and Leacock. The last four rest from their labours—one of them among the heathen graves of Africa. The loss of the building is felt the more, as there is a good prospect, under God's blessing, of reviving the Church, on the historic ground. The Wardens and Vestry have so well set forth their case with Nature's simple eloquence, in the following resolutions, that nothing can be needed from me to help their access to the hearts and hands of Churchmen everywhere:

At a meeting of the Wardens and Vestrymen of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, held at the Mansion House in Rahway, Middlesex County, N. J., on Tuesday the 22d of March, 1858, it was unanimously

Resolved, That in the destruction by fire of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, we have sustained the loss of our holy sanctuary, which though an humble one, was endeared to us by many hallowed memories, and the Church in New Jersey has lost one of her most ancient Temples, associated with the labours of those whose names are dear to her.

Resolved, That, honoring the memory of those who have labored in our ancient parish, and the dead who repose in our old church yard, we pledge ourselves to engage earnestly in the work of restoring the Church in Woodbridge, and respectfully solicit the aid of our friends who feel an interest in this work.

Resolved, That although there are few families in our Parish upon whose aid we can at present depend, the past history of the Church in Woodbridge, and its present prospects, encourage us to think that a new Church, with regular ministrations, would be well attended.

Resolved, That the Wardens and Vestrymen approve of the plan submitted to them by Mr. Upjohn, architect, and desire to erect a church similar in design, not to exceed \$2500.

Resolved, That the Wardens and Vestrymen of Trinity Church, be appointed a committee to solicit subscriptions in Woodbridge and its vicinity, and that all collections shall be placed in the hands of the Senior Warden and Junior Warden, who shall deposit the same in some Bank, subject to be drawn by their joint clerk only.

Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting be submitted to the Bishop of the Diocese, with a request that he prepare a Pastoral Letter to the friends of our Parish in the Diocese and elsewhere, asking help in our behalf.

Alanson Newton,	
Jotham Coddington,	Wardens.
George Lasslett,	
J. H. Campbell,	
William E. Fink,	Vestrymen.
George A. Hollister,	

Heartily commending this truly interesting appeal to the piety and patronage of all who love the Church, with devout prayers, that God bless the application, and bless all who favour it, I am faithfully and affectionately your friend in Christ,

G. W. DOANE,
Bishop of New Jersey."

Subscription lists were circulated, and in a short time \$2330.13 was pledged by people living in Woodbridge and the vicinity. Even the Rev. Mr. Ogilby, the former Rector, interested two friends of his in Philadelphia to match his own contribution of \$25, making a total of \$75 from this source alone.

There was some dispute at first as to whether it would not be better to purchase land in the center of the town and there build the new church where it would be in a more convenient location. This opinion did not prevail, and plans were made to build the new edifice on the old site, hallowed as it was by a century and a half of devoted lives and efforts.

The Reverend Mr. Hoffman had much to do with the building of the new Church, and in his official biography, the following appears about the old church which had been burned down:

"It was a wooden building with oaken frame, substantially put together, and which for more than a century withstood the wind and storms, even in its decay having a suggestive power, as was observed by someone writing of it, 'We never passed it, with its hipped roof, quaint belfry, and shingled sides, still bearing the marks of Revolutionary Cannon-balls, without feeling that it was a link which bound us to another century and to the men whose blood laid the foundation of our noble republic—The graveyard about it is thick with the bones of those who fell in the defence of their country's rights.'

'It had even a converting power' a correspondent of the 'Church Journal' of May 20, 1861, writes. 'For years the only purpose for which the old church served, so far as men saw, was that of affording a fold for the few sheep that browsed on the grass of the graveyard and retired within its walls through a broken panel in the door to seek shelter from the storms. Often when it was opened by Bishop Doane for a service on his annual visitation, there were not a dozen to be found to unite in the solemn sacrifice of prayer and praise; and when it was entirely destroyed by fire three years since, the little band that had clung to it as their sanctuary nearly gave up all as lost. Yet even when its walls resounded with the bleating of dumb sheep, their silent witness was a means of bringing one to the Church who still successfully labors in his priestly office after a ministry of more than 30 years.'"

On October 16th, 1858, Bishop Doane made his last visitation to Woodbridge before his death, the service being held in the Presbyterian Church. This neighboring church was generously placed at the disposal of Mr. Hoffman for Sunday afternoon services; later the Public School House was also used.

The original plans must have been changed, for the building which was actually erected had as its architect Mr. C. Harrison Condit, of Newark, New Jersey, who received \$90 for his services. The Church was now planned to cost \$3000.

The cornerstone was laid on July 7th, 1860, by the Right Reverend William Henry Odenheimer, D. D., Bishop of the Diocese of New Jersey, in the first year of his consecration.

¹Riley, "Memorial Biography of the Very Reverend Eugene Augustus Hoffman", 1904, pp. 384-385.

George Hogan was the builder. The Building Committee consisted of the Rector, Lorraine Freeman, and Milton Arrowsmith. The Wardens were Jotham Coddington and Lorraine Freeman; the Vestrymen were Milton Arrowsmith, George Lasslett, W. H. Benton, and James Bloodgood.

The Cornerstone contained the following articles (according to a contemporary list now in the Parish Safe):

"Bible.
Prayer Book.
Journal of the General Convention, 1860.
Journal of the Diocesan Convention, 1859.
Canons of this Diocese.
Copy of the Charter of this Church Granted by George III, 1769.
Pastoral Letter of the Rt. Rev. G. W. Doane, D. D., Bishop of this Diocese, on the occasion of the burning of the Church, 1858.
Service used this day.
Church Almanac.
Churchman, and Church Journal, newspapers.
Memoir of Bishop Doane, from the Church Review, Oct. 1859.
Book on Free Churches.
Parish statistics of Christ Church, Elizabeth, N. J., 1860.
Eucharist Week.
Weekly Eucharist."

The distance between Mr. Hoffman's Churches in Elizabeth and Woodbridge was quite a problem in those days and we are not surprised to find him receiving \$10 from the Treasurer of Trinity Church in April 1861 for "horse hire of Missionary!" He must have spent many hours travelling between his two Churches.

In the spring of 1861, when the Church was almost ready, the ladies of the Parish formed a "Ladies Aid Society" with Miss Sarah Coddington and Miss Jane Arrowsmith as 1st and 2nd Directress respectively, and Mrs. George C. Hance as Treasurer. They paid almost a hundred dollars for cushioning the pews of the new Church, \$141 for carpets, and \$100 for a furnace. As the years went by, this organization grew and did more and more to help the church.

The new Church, although costing \$3333.44, was completed without incurring a dollar of debt, through the devoted efforts of all concerned. Thus the church could be consecrated.

The Consecration took place on Whitsun Monday, May 20th, 1861, Bishop Odenheimer pronouncing the sentence of consecration, and affixing his Episcopal Seal (avec mitre) to the red sealing wax at the bottom of the document prepared to certify thereto. Attending the Bishop on that occasion were the Reverend Messrs. Dunn, Crowe, Rev. Dr. Ogilby, of Trinity Church, New York, Rev. Jesse Pound of Staten Island, Rev. Mr. Homans, and Mr. Hoffman, the Rector.¹ Dr. Ogilby preached the sermon, concerning which it was said:

"It was said that there could not have been a happier selection of a preacher or subject of discussion under the circumstances of place and occasion. His text was Psalms 113:15-17. With touching simplicity he drew a picture of the congregation as it ordinarily assembled in the old church during his own ministry there, alluding to its members by name and with a few words of loving remembrance for each, starting the tears in many eyes as he called up the familiar forms of many who have now gone to their rest. Last, but not least, he spoke of good old Mr. Tyrell, the 'Old Mortality' of the place, whose whole heart was in that church, and who, when it fell into decay, begged the money from the Churchmen of his diocese to buy material, then took up his abode in the Church until with his own hands, he had put the building in perfect order; and who when asked how he could preserve so cheerful a countenance amid so much privation and want as he endured, always replied that he had learned from his youth to say 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost' and now whatever befel him, whether it were prosperity or adversity, he still repeated these words and they always brought sunshine into his heart."¹

Mr. Hoffman then announced that all the seats in the Church were to be free,² a new departure for Trinity Church, Woodbridge, which had previously depended upon pew rents for a considerable proportion of the Church's income. The Vestry now proposed, in a truly commendable and Christlike manner, to rely for the current expenses upon the free-will offerings of the people. The Rector added that "all the furniture of the building, including the glass, bell, and font had been presented by different individuals. A beautiful silver paten for the Holy Communion was presented on the day of the Church's consecration, inscribed: 'The Gift of Christ Church, Elizabeth, N. J., to Trinity Church, Woodbridge, N. J., Whitsun-Monday, 1861,' a gift which continues to be used regularly.

A few words about Mr. Hoffman, whose share in the re-awakening of Trinity Church was so great, will not be inappropriate here. Eugene Augustus Hoffman was born in New York City on March 21, 1829. He studied at Rutgers, where he received his B. A. Not long afterwards he received his M. A. from Harvard. He studied for the sacred priesthood at the General Theological Seminary, and was ordained on St. Peter's Day (June 29th) 1851. The newly-organized Christ Church parish, Elizabeth, New Jersey, called him as Rector when he had been ordained Priest in 1853. It was while there that he did his splendid work for the Parish in Woodbridge. In 1863 he became Rector of St. Mary's Church in Burlington, going the following year to Grace Church, Brooklyn. There he remained until he accepted the call of St. Mark's Church, Philadelphia, in 1869. In 1878 he became Dean of the General Theological Seminary in New York — a post he ably filled until his death in June 19th, 1902. During the later years of his life he received the degree D. D. from seven colleges, universities and seminaries: Rutgers, Columbia, Trinity, Harvard,

¹Riley, Memoir of Dean Hoffman, p. 386.

¹Riley, Memorial Biography of Dean Hoffman, p. 386.

²Ibid., pp. 387-388.

Racine, G. T. S., and Oxford. King's College, Windsor, Ontario, Canada, bestowed the degree D. C. L. upon him, and the University of the South and Trinity College, Toronto, Canada, gave him the degree L. L. D. He was also President for some years of the New York Historical Society.¹

The Diocesan Convention took place a week after the Consecration of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, and Mr. Hoffman then reported: "The Parish is prospering beyond expectation, and the congregation is gradually increasing." During the next Convention year the Rev. Ephraim de Puy assisted Mr. Hoffman at Woodbridge.

The rebuilding of the Church had reawakened energy all through the Parish, and over \$330 had been given for Parish and other purposes during the year. Services were being held every Sunday afternoon, and once a month Holy Communion was celebrated in the morning, and also on the greater festivals.

In May 1862 the Reverend Peter L. Jaques was called as full-time Rector. He accepted, and agreed to begin his duties on June first. His letter of acceptance follows:

Messrs, Lorraine Freeman
Geo. C. Hance

"Port Colden, N. J.
May 14th, 1862.

Dear Brethren:

Your official communication of the 9th inst, as a Committee of the Vestry of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, inviting me to the Rectorship of the said Parish, is before me. I accept the invitation on the terms specified, and will, by the help of God, endeavour to be a faithful minister of Christ, in all matters temporal and spiritual, among you, while I shall be permitted to be over you in the Lord.

I shall endeavour to be with you, the Lord permitting, on the first of next month.

Very respectfully yours in Christ,
P. L. Jaques."

Upon his acceptance, the clergy of Christ Church, Elizabeth, withdrew, their work having been done so well that the Parish now felt able to support a resident Rector. Mr. Hoffman wrote the following letter of resignation:

Gentlemen,

Elizabeth, N. J.
4 June, 1862

I cannot resign, to the Bishop, my position as Missionary to your parish without expressing to you, as a body, my appreciation of the uniform kindness and hearty cooperation which I have received from you during the four years in which I have been permitted to officiate as your minister. In all my efforts for the rebuilding of the Church it has been to me a constant source of pleasure that we have been enabled to work together with entire harmony of purpose; and I feel that we have great cause for gratitude to Almighty God, that he has crowned our labors with success. In resigning the charge into the hands of my friend the Rev. Mr. Jaques, my only regret is that I shall not have the pleasure of meeting you so frequently as before. Permit

¹Riley, Memoir, pp. 752ff., etc.

me however to add that I shall always feel the deepest interest in all that pertains to the welfare of your parish, and pray for the continuance of God's blessing on both pastor and people.

Faithfully and Affectionately Yours,

Eugene Augs. Hoffman.

The Wardens and Vestrymen of
Trinity Church, Woodbridge, N. J.

A year later Mr. Jaques was able to report real growth: 25 Families and 110 individuals now being connected with the Parish, and total offerings (\$681) more than double those of the year before. In spite of the troublous times of the Civil War, work went forward and the parish began to make plans to repay its many missionary debts by opening two or three missionary stations of its own on the outskirts of the geographically large Parish. Mr. Jaques' institution to the Rectorship did not take place until April 17, 1863.

In July of that year a mission station was opened at the Star School House in Rahway Neck, and a month later another was begun in the School House at the six Roads.¹ Both undertakings met with deserved success.

During the same year of 1863 the congregation purchased a "fine commodious house and lot of two acres of land in a retired and pleasant part of the village, at a cost of \$5000, for a Rectory."² By May 1864 \$1500 had already been paid off on the Rectory and we find the Rector and his family residing therein to their greater comfort. This was the first Rectory which Trinity Church ever owned.

Mission services were begun at Uniontown in the autumn of 1864, but were discontinued for lack of encouragement. During 1865-1866 Mr. Jaques devoted one Sunday a month to holding Missionary services in Hunterdon County, where the ministrations of the Church were much needed. It is splendid to behold the way that the Rector and members of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, began to repay their long-standing missionary obligations so promptly and so fully.

By 1867 the annual income of the Parish had grown to \$1,535.20 and \$500 was being paid towards the debt on the Rectory each year. Mr. Jaques reported that both spiritually and financially the parish was making most encouraging progress. In 1868 the number of families had grown to 39 and individuals to 143.

¹Henry Morris de Russy, Esq., a local antique connoisseur informs me that the Six Roads is that place where the present Lincoln Highway and St. George's Avenue meet. There are still 'six roads' there today. It lies between Colonia and Rahway and Woodbridge.

²The same person informs me that this house is the one now known as 166 Rahway Avenue, the home of the late Mrs. Tisdale. E. R. W.

It is interesting to note that as the members of the Parish began to GIVE both money and effort to helping people and causes other than themselves, their own affairs prospered wonderfully. This fact has been noticed by others elsewhere before, and no doubt will continue to be remarked in years to come, for it is based upon one of God's principles that unless one loses one's life for the Gospel's sake, he will not gain it! Strange paradox, but convincingly illustrated by the history of Trinity Church, Woodbridge.

CHAPTER XI

Six Short Rectorates: 1869-1884

The Reverend Mr. Jaques resigned in February 1869 and the Reverend Robert C. McIlwain took charge of the Parish on Trinity Sunday, May 23rd, of the same year, later becoming Rector. The departing Rector seems to have gone to Christ Church, Middletown, where we know he was officiating in 1873.

During the year 1869 a new bell and organ were installed at a cost of over \$400. In December the Centennial of the Church's Charter was fittingly celebrated and on that occasion a large cup was given, inscribed: "In Memoriam Rev. C. Hance to Trinity Church, Woodbridge, N. J., December 6, 1869."

Mr. McIlwain reported in 1870 that "there is a good deal of interest manifested in the Parish. The attendance has greatly improved during the year, and there is an effort now being made to build a Sunday School room and Sexton's House and doubtless ere long the Church will be finished by building on a Chancel. Notwithstanding some very rare and inhuman trials, there is evidence of the work of God's good spirit sufficient to encourage the Rector."

Perhaps this last sentence ("very rare and inhuman trials") gives us a possible clue as to why Mr. Jaques resigned. In any case Mr. McIlwain appears himself to have resigned the Rectorship not long afterwards (about July 1871). For five months the Parish was supplied regularly until the Rev. J. A. Penniman took charge on December 10th. He did not become Rector until the Second Sunday after Easter (1872).

In 1872 the Rectory purchased in 1863 having been sold, an old house adjoining the church property was purchased for a Rectory and reconstructed. Mr. George C. Hance appears to have been the chief donor who made this change possible.

The old house was that which had originally been the dwelling of Jonathan Dunham, the famous Woodbridge Miller of 1670. He had used brick brought over from Holland. Later the house was used (according to common report) during the Revolutionary War as a small fort. When the property became the possession of Trinity Church, this old building was considerably changed. It was greatly enlarged, being doubled in size and completely renovated within. A Dining Room and Kitchen, with two bedrooms over, were added at the back of the house. The former Dining Room now became the Rector's Study. Tradition holds that prior to this time a lean-to frame Kitchen adjoined the house at the back. The foundations, cellar beams (hand-hewn by an adze) and part of the brick walls remain of the old house, but many improvements were

made, including lovely chestnut woodwork all over the house. Gothic arched doors and window-trimmings, and a fine old English Walnut built-in book case in the Study. The front door appears to have been changed from the West to the South side of the building at this time. To this day there is evidence of a circular carriage drive in front of the present side door, which then would have served as the main entrance.

Mr. Penniman remained as Rector an even shorter time than his predecessor. The Reverend T. Lewis Bannister was called to succeed him on October 10, 1872; accepted promptly, and entered upon his duties even more promptly (if that is possible), by taking the services on the following Sunday. He was regularly instituted by the Bishop on January 21, 1873. At the Convention of that year he reported: "A reading room for benefit of working class of the parish has been opened and several lectures have been delivered in it by a brother clergyman and other friends have promised to aid us in like manner. We have a very handsome Rectory, but lately finished, at a cost of about \$13,000 of which \$8000 was realized by the sale of the former Rectory and hope in the course of the year to add other improvements." Much of this was due to the liberality of the Senior Warden, George C. Hance, and his wife.

In 1873 the new Rector reported the expenditure of \$7,000 on Rectory improvement, but the number of individuals connected with the parish shows an incredible drop from 212 reported in 1872 to 112 in 1873. A year later the building program continued, and the long planned Sexton's house and Sunday School Room was built at a cost of over \$4,000. Mr. Hance appears to have been the chief donor. At this time the Rector's stipend was raised to \$1,000 a year.

The Parish again changed Rectors in 1875 when the Rev. Mr. Bannister ended his connection with Trinity Church on January 1st. The Reverend Julian Edward Ingle assumed charge on April 1st and was instituted by Bishop Scarborough on April 15th. On this occasion the Bishop¹ was attended by 15 clergy, one of whom, the Reverend Mr. Stevens Parker, preached the sermon.

The building era continued. A fence was constructed to enclose the entire church property at a cost of over \$1000, and a new furnace was installed.

The conspicuous service to the Diocese which one of the lay members of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, rendered during this period should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. George C. Hance, besides giving most generously of his time and money to his own Parish, also served the Diocese upon many important committees for a number of years. In 1876 we find him serv-

ing on no less than five out of a total of twenty-one diocesan committees: those on "General Theological Seminary", "Missions", "Finance", "Episcopal Support", and "Publication of the Diocesan Journal".

The Revd. Mr. Ingle brought his Rectorate to a close in 1879. In doing so he said, "I leave it (Trinity Parish) with sincere regret. The Parish has no indebtedness resting upon it and its general condition is encouraging." He also remarked upon the "uniform kindness of the people."

On July 1st, 1879, the Reverend Frank Hallam took charge of the Parish of Woodbridge, but was forced to resign in April 1880 on the ground of ill health. However, during his short tenure of office, a long needed chancel was built, which together with other improvements to the interior of the Church, cost above \$3,625. During these years a number of trees were planted in the grounds of the Church, Rectory, and graveyard.

During the interval of six months between the resignation of Mr. Hallam and the arrival of the new Rector, the Parish was supplied by the Rev. Thomas H. Gordon.

The Reverend Howard E. Thompson's Rectorship began on October 14th, 1880. The Parish began to bloom under his effective leadership. More frequent Communion were made by the members of the congregation. Many who had grown inactive were reawakened into activity. The membership of the Parish grew until a new record total of 292 was reached in 1884.

In 1881 the Rector reported: that a horse and carriage had been secured for the Rector; that an endowment fund of \$2,000 had been begun by a gift from Mr. George C. Hance, the interest of which was to secure the services of a sexton; and that repairs had been made to the interior of the vacant Rectory, and a family placed in charge. Even plans for a Parochial School were entertained, but one does not appear ever to have been started.

For some years past the Parish had been maintaining regular services at a Mission which had been started at Ford's Corners, and this work was especially promising during Mr. Thompson's Rectorate.

Mr. Hance made another large gift, of \$3,000, to the Parish Endowment Fund at Christmas of 1881, which brought the total to \$5,000. During 1882 the number of pledges for the support of the parish doubled the number of the previous year. The Church property was all in good order and wholly free of debt. At Easter two memorial windows, an elaborately carved eagle lectern, and a brass altar desk were given to the Church. All of these gifts are in the Church to this day (1935).

¹The Diocese of New Jersey had been divided into the Dioceses of Newark and New Jersey. Bishop Odenheimer going to Newark and Bishop Scarborough was New Jersey's new Bishop.

A very good second-hand pipe-organ was installed in 1883, adding much to the beauty of the services, of which there were a record number of 346 during the following year.

On November 23rd, 1884, Mr. Thompson resigned as Rector of Trinity Church to accept a call as Rector of Christ Church, Woodbury, and St. James, Paulsboro. He also served for many years as Secretary of the Diocese, and was finally in charge of Trinity Church, Hightstown, N. J. and Honorary Canon of the Cathedral at Trenton.

CHAPTER XII

A Fruitful Decade: 1885-1895

The Reverend Mr. Thompson's successor, the Reverend Lewis H. Lighthipe, did not assume charge until February 22nd, 1885. His was to be a comparatively long Rectorate of ten years: long by comparison with those of his predecessors. Bishop Scarborough instituted him on April 21st, 1885.

The old safe, which still adorns the Rector's Study, is first mentioned in 1885. A list of the "Contents of the Church Safe, 1885" is among the papers in the said safe. Three things then contained in the safe are today missing: the old Parish Seal, a Communion spoon, and the old map of the Church Property.

At some time during this period of Trinity Church's history some property in Linden came into the Church's possession. It provided the Parish with a certain amount of money from time to time, but on other occasions it gave only trouble and embarrassment with defaulting tenants, taxes, et cetera, and finally was disposed of.

Mr. George C. Hance had gone to his reward, and the building era of the Church was over, but it is noticeable as one studies the work of Mr. Lighthipe year after year that he was doing a splendid piece of work. Nothing spectacular was achieved materially: that had been done and done well during Mr. Thompson's Rectorship. Mr. Lighthipe took up the job where it had been left and went on to build up the parish spiritually as it had never been built up before.)

In the midst of parochial duties, the Rector found time to play the host to the Convention of New Brunswick in 1887, when that half of the Diocese held its annual meeting at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, on September 27th.

The Parish continued to include about 290 individuals, and missionary work was done on the outskirts. Ford's Corners continued to receive ministrations and the old station at Star Landing was again opened in 1889. Star Landing soon came to have another name: Carteret, which it bears today.

The Mission at Ford's Corners (now known as Fords) is today (1935) under the charge of the Rector of Metuchen. The first instance we have of ministrations from that welcome quarter appears to be in the Convention year of 1890-1891, when Mr. Lighthipe reported that he had been assisted by the Reverend H. H. Roche of Metuchen. This was probably during the Woodbridge Rector's three month's absence in Florida, where he supplied the services at Christ Church, Monticello. In his absence, the services at Trinity Church were supplied by

a Priest and a Lay-Reader from the General Theological Seminary in New York.

During the next year (1891-1892) the Mission at Fords was transferred to the care of Mr. Roche, the Rector of Metuchen. This action was probably the result of Mr. Lighthipe's increasing duties in his large Parish. Woodbridge Township is said to be the largest in the whole State of New Jersey, and the Parish of Woodbridge has been one of great geographic extent. One of the Rector's additional duties was the care of another mission which he had started at Sewaren, on Staten Island Sound, a growing residential settlement within the Parish.

At Carteret the services were being held once in two weeks in the public school house by the Rector, the average attendance being 25. Services twice each Sunday were being held at Sewaren by a Lay-Reader from General Theological Seminary. The Rector of Woodbridge administered the Holy Communion there once a month. The services were held in a private house, but the growing congregation was taking steps towards organizing a separate Parish, and was planning to build a church.

A Parish was organized to be known as St. John's Parish, Sewaren, and was formally set off from Trinity Church, Woodbridge, in May 1892. The money to erect the church was raised by the Sewaren Church Building Assn., organized in July 1891, with William Ratcliff as President and William M. Ballard as Secretary-Treasurer. The Corner-stone of the building was laid, with appropriate services, by Bishop Scarborough on June 18, 1892, and the Church opened for divine worship by the Reverend T. McK. Brown on the 4th of September of the same year.

The formation of the new Parish at Sewaren naturally decreased the numbers of the congregation at Trinity Church, Woodbridge, but the very loss was a gain: a new Parish had been created, and the mother parish could take pride in the fact. The work of the Parish at Carteret continued to grow too, and the congregation there soon averaged 40 as compared to 25 the year previous. Mr. Lighthipe's labours were beginning to bear fruit abundantly.

The Rector reported many losses by removals during the year 1893-1894. In that period the Church inherited two houses in Perth Amboy valued at \$4,000, left by the will of the late Mrs. Morgan Davis, a communicant of the Parish.

The Mission at Carteret by 1895 was called St. Mark's Mission — and received services every Sunday afternoon instead of on alternate weeks only.

The Revd. Mr. Lighthipe resigned as Rector of Trinity Church on November 7th, 1895.¹ His going was a deep loss to the Parish — and it was not until the arrival of the Reverend Father Stowe in 1919 that the Parish once again began to realize its possibilities.

¹In 1923 he was Rector of Trinity Parish, Rocky Hill, N. J.

CHAPTER XIII

The Dark Quarter of a Century: 1895-1919

Within six months after the departure of Mr. Lighthipe the number of people connected with the Parish had decreased by half, according to the Diocesan Convention Report, which indicated that the Parish had no Rector or Priest-in-charge.

Soon Mr. Rudolph Emile Brestell took charge of the Parish as a Lay-Reader. Several Priests supplied the Parish too: the Revd. Messrs. N. D. Van Syckel, Charles Theodore Seibt, John Acworth, and Allan Hawkesworth. Throughout this period the Rectory was rented out at \$7 a month, the parlor being reserved.

Bishop Scarborough in his Address to the Diocesan Convention of 1897 said: "Trinity Church, Woodbridge, has been improved at considerable cost, but has not yet obtained a Rector. The congregation seems quite content with lay-reading. This is but one of several instances where vestries find it more economical not to undertake the support of a clergyman. It is an evil which needs to be corrected."

Finally in 1899, shortly after Easter, a Rector was once more in charge of Trinity Church: the Reverend Scott B. Rathbun. But for some reason or reasons the Parish continued to languish. Undoubtedly the new Rector found the Parish in a dreadful condition after four years of handling by a Rectorless Vestry. That this was the case is indicated by a letter which he sent out two years later. The following are extracts from that letter:

"Trinity Rectory
Woodbridge
Easter 1901

To the Members of Trinity Parish:

In view of the fact that few seem to possess accurate knowledge of the condition of our Parish affairs, either past or present —

Ten years ago this Parish owned real estate, outside of the immediate church and rectory property, to the value of over \$3,000, and held also an interest-bearing endowment of \$5,000 — ; between that time and the date when the present Rector and Vestry took charge of affairs (two years ago) that real estate had been sold and the proceeds SPENT, excepting only a cash balance of about \$100.00 and a second mortgage on part of the property for \$300. In the meantime also the endowment fund had, for several years, failed to produce any income and the capital itself appeared to be on the verge of complete extinction.

Under the circumstances it seemed clear that such ruinous methods of management and financiering must be changed if we would save the Parish from absolute bankruptcy, and we are now happy to be able to report that our efforts in that direction have been, in a large degree, successful, — "

An appeal is then made for money, regular pledges, and the letter is signed not only by the Rector, but by the following:

John H. Love
James Peoples Wardens
S. W. Middleton
William Fink
H. R. Valentine Vestrymen
William Love

In 1901 Mr. Rathbun was receiving a salary of only \$200. It was raised later to \$300. He is said to have made the greater part of his living by working for an Insurance Company, a job which took him out of town each week-day. This was not the kind of an arrangement calculated to achieve desirable results in a parish. In order to grow a Parish must have the full time of a Rector, and much more besides!

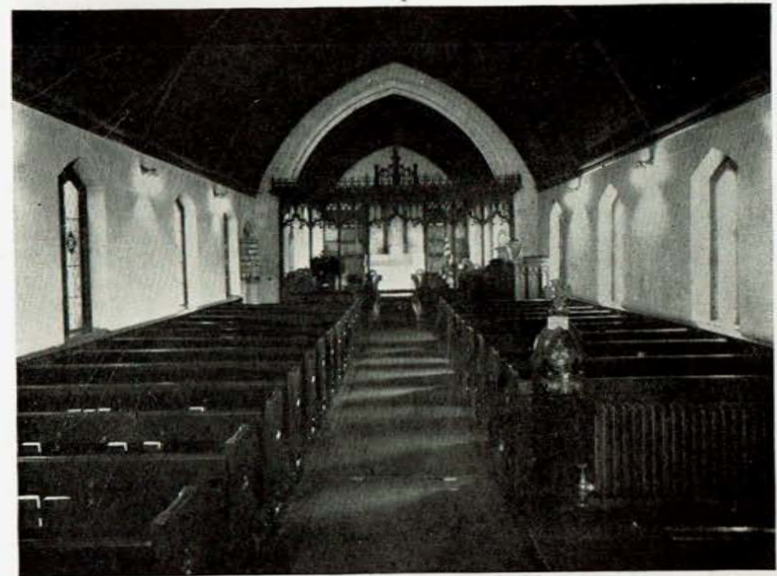
The Parish grew smaller and weaker. In 1905 no report was made to the Diocese, and in 1906 the report showed further decay. A year later the Rector's salary was cut to \$250, and difficulty was experienced in raising even that sum, for in the following year it was reduced to \$225, and in 1909 to a bare \$200.

In the meanwhile the Parish was slowly but constantly decreasing in numbers, and the future of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, appeared black indeed. It was as though all hope were lost, and only total extinction were being passively awaited. No report at all was made during three successive years (1911, 1912, and 1913), but in the latter year Mr. Frank Dean Gifford was listed as Lay Reader under Mr. Rathbun as Rector. During those three years (October 1910-May 1913) the Rev. J. A. Springsted, and the Venerable R. Bowden Shepherd, Archdeacon of the Diocese, supplied the Parish with clerical ministrations from time to time.

A report made in 1914 showed signs of improvement, but the situation was a bad one, and a veritable reformation or revolution was needed to get the Parish out of its slough of despond, and actively growing towards its goal once more.

In 1914 the Reverend Henry Hale Gifford, Ph. D., became Rector, the former Rector now becoming Rector-Emeritus, and the son of the new Rector, Mr. Frank Dean Gifford, continuing as Lay-Reader. Dr. H. H. Gifford was also Rector of St. James' Piscataway, where he resided. After Mr. F. D. Gifford was ordained, he went to Japan as a Missionary. His father, Dr. H. H. Gifford is now Rector of St. Andrew's Church, New Berlin, New York, and the son is Rector of St. Thomas' Church, Manaroneck, New York.

In 1918 the Reverend Reginald Harwood Thomas came to Trinity Church, Woodbridge, as Deacon-in-Charge, and was ordained to the sacred Priesthood on October 18th of that same year. He was a Canadian, not connected with the Diocese, but was temporarily working here while residing at



Trinity Church: The Interior in 1932 (after the new Memorial Altar had been installed)

Keyport, where he was a member of the Associate Mission under the Reverend Benjamin Dagwell.

Let it be recorded to the eternal credit of Professor John H. Love, that he has served God as a Warden of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, since 1899. The first twenty years of his wardenship were years of dismal decay. On more than one occasion Prof. Love would (as a lay reader) conduct Morning Prayer with only one person in the congregation. It is inspiring to recall the courageous way he continued to give himself unselfishly to the work year by year even when it seemed futile to expend any more time or money in lengthening the days of an apparently dying parish. Professor Love has said of that period: "We often wondered whether we ought not to lock the church and throw the keys away."

CHAPTER XIV

Walter Herbert Stowe: 1919-1921

The Reverend Walter Herbert Stowe succeeded Mr. Thomas as Priest-in-Charge in June 1919. It was a momentous event in the life of decayed Trinity Church, Woodbridge! The man and the opportunity met — and the result was little short of miraculous!

Father Stowe was born in Waterville, Minnesota, on January 22, 1895, the son of Herbert Hugh Stowe and Addie Jane Tower. He attended the Public Schools in Waterville before going to the University of Minnesota from which he was graduated with the degree of B. A. in 1915. He then attended Seabury Divinity School from which he received the degree B. D. in 1918. He was a master at the Shattuck School in Faribault, Minnesota during the school year of 1918-1919. He then (having been made Deacon in 1917) was ordained Priest by Bishop McElwain in 1919, and came East to become King Fellow at the General Theological Seminary. He became a member of the Associate Mission under Fr. Dagwell, and thus was sent to Woodbridge. During his two years at Woodbridge he spent much of his time in New York at the General Seminary where his first duty lay. That he should have accomplished so much at the Parish in Woodbridge while working only part time is all the more marvellous!

When he arrived there were only 80 baptized persons in the Parish, no Sunday School, and the Vestry was the only organization with which he had to work and accomplish things. The stipend was \$50 a month, and small wonder, for there was but one service on Sunday, and only a handful in the congregation.

St. Mark's Carteret, had been assigned to Father Stowe upon his coming to Woodbridge, but he was soon relieved of this assignment as he had all he could handle at Trinity Church.

The Vestry offered him \$100 a month in the autumn, but he accepted only \$75, since he felt they could not afford to pay more.

Throughout his all-too-short tenure he never became Rector, but was Priest-in-charge, because he was still canonically connected with the Diocese of Minnesota.

It is difficult adequately to describe the progress of the two years from the summer of 1919 to 1921. Father Stowe wrote letters stirring people up to their responsibilities. He advertised the Church (what it stood for and what it offered) in the local papers. He organized the women of the Parish

into four Guild Units: the St. Elizabeth's the St. Margaret's, the St. Martha's, and the St. Mary's Units. These Units raised \$1,750 in the first full year of their existence.

The small chancel was lengthened considerably; a much-needed choir room was built; an old broom closet at the West end of the Church was converted into a beautiful Gothic Baptistry in memory of Ira Chapman Dunn, the member of the Parish who had given his life in France in 1918. The whole interior of the Church was finished in Caen stone under the supervision of the architect, Mr. Percy L. Fowler of Trenton. While this work was being done in the Church, services were held in the Parish House.

Many Perth Amboy residents were moving out to Woodbridge, which was becoming a residential suburb¹ of that city. Fr. Stowe sensed the needs and opportunities which a growing community presented and through his far-sighted leadership placed Trinity Church in a strong position to answer those needs and make the most of those opportunities.

A new organ was badly needed, and early in 1920 money began to be raised. The necessary sum was raised by the St. Elizabeth's Unit, and the new organ, made by Clark of Nyack, was installed and dedicated on February 13th, 1921.

A Men's Club was organized with great success and enjoyment. Much assistance was rendered by this organization.

There was no Sunday School, but by means of the devoted efforts of Mr. Daniel Demarest, a School was started in the fall of 1920. This Sunday School met a great need, and contributed much to the successful growth of the Parish.

The Church was without a pulpit, so a handsome octagonal carved oak pulpit costing \$600 was presented by Mr. Frank R. Valentine and his sister, Mrs. C. R. Brown, in memory of their father. This pulpit, together with a handsome carved oak Rood-Screen costing \$2500, was designed by the Church's architect, Mr. Percy Fowler. The Rood-Screen was given by Mrs. M. D. Valentine in memory of her husband.

Many other achievements deserve to be recorded. Altar furnishings and appointments to the value of \$500 were given by the St. Martha's Unit. The St. Margaret's Unit gave the Church a new bell costing \$225. The St. Mary's Unit raised \$300 to finish off the basement of the Church and install a furnace. The Sexton's House was repaired, painted, and a new roof put on. A fine iron fence was erected around the whole Church property in memory of one of the Vernon family.

By May 1921 the Rector had doubled the number of baptized persons from 80 to 168 in two years. In every way

¹The following Census figures show the growth of Woodbridge during the past twenty years:

1910 —	8,948
1920 —	13,423
1930 —	25,266

the Parish had been completely changed for the best. Fr. Stowe was also responsible for raising the tone of the Parish's Churchmanship. He began to have weekly celebrations of the Holy Eucharist at 8 A. M. and fortnightly at eleven. The use of processional cross, altar lights, and Eucharistic vestments was begun during his administration.

Then the Priest-in-Charge, whose two years' leave of absence from the Diocese of Minnesota was up, had to leave Trinity Church, Woodbridge in August 1921. Every one knew that if the work was to go on as he had started it, a man of his ability must be secured as Rector. Such a man could not be had for less than a stipend of \$1,800 and a modern Rectory. An appeal was made and before Fr. Stowe left, \$2,500 had been raised and spent in modernizing the old Rectory by installing electric lights, plumbing (including a bath room) and a heating plant, and generally repairing and re-decorating it.

When Father Stowe left in 1921 to become Rector of St. Luke's Wilmar, Minn., he did so after having accomplished in two short years an unbelievable amount of work, leaving behind only a \$4,500 debt out of some \$20,000 worth of permanent improvements. Today he is Rector of famous old Christ Church, New Brunswick, N. J.

CHAPTER XV

A Decade of Unfulfilled Expectations: 1921-1931

The Reverend Edward Harold Vogt became Rector in the summer of 1921 and began at once to carry on the work which had been so splendidly begun by Father Stowe. No notable advance appears to have marked his Rectorate; he tended the sheep that had been handed to him and did that well. He remained only two years, however, and departed in the summer of 1923 to become Rector of Trinity Church, Bridgeton, New Jersey. He remained there only a year before going to Greenwood, Virginia, for his wife's health, in September 1924. Soon, however, we find him moving northwards again to become Rector of St. Wilfred's Church in Camden, N. J., before May of 1925. There he remained until 1930, when he became Assistant of St. Peter's Church, Germantown, Philadelphia, and in 1931 succeeded to the Rectorship.

After his departure in August, 1923, Trinity Church, Woodbridge, was supplied for seven months by Fr. Frank Dean Gifford, Mr. Thomas Moran (a Lay-Reader of the Parish), Fr. Toy and Fr. McKinley, until the new Rector, the Reverend J. Benjamin Myers, took charge on October 7th, 1923. Father Myers had been Rector of the Church of Our Merciful Saviour at Penns Grove.

During the first year of Fr. Myers' Rectorate, the number of Baptized persons connected with the Parish increased from 170 to 325, and by 1925 to 355, which represented the peak. From that time the Parish began slowly, then faster, to decline. In 1926 there were 300, and in 1927: 270 baptized persons. The number had shrunk to 189 by the Spring of 1931. These figures have been given because they would seem to be indicative of the rise and fall of the Parish under Fr. Myers' leadership. Both the Rector and the congregation appear to have grown discouraged, and no one can accomplish satisfactory results under the mighty hindrance of discouragement and hopelessness.

During his Rectorate the Parish celebrated its 225th Anniversary in 1927, not then realizing that it dated back to 1698 instead of 1702.

During the boom years of 1921 to 1929 the debt of \$4,500 which Fr. Stowe had left behind was diminished by a mere \$280, when the entire amount should have been wiped out while prosperous times made such a feat comparatively

easy. But not only did the Parish fail to attack its debt of \$4,220, but it got deeper and deeper into debt for current running expenses, so that by the Spring of 1931 the Parish was over \$7,000 in debt.

Father Myers resigned as Rector in April 1931 to become Assistant at Trinity Chapel, New York City.

CHAPTER XVI

The Present: 1931-1935

The Reverend Edward Randolph Welles took charge of the Parish on Whitsunday (May 24th) 1931. After his ordination to the Sacred Priesthood on the Feast of SS. Simon and Jude (October 28th) 1931, he became Rector. Since it is difficult accurately and impartially to evaluate one's own work, the present writer will merely record briefly certain facts connected with his rectorship. He regrets that this precludes the mention by name of the many individuals who were largely responsible for the results described below.

Father Myers in his Annual Report of December 31st, 1930 (which was never mailed to Diocesan Headquarters) reported 140 Communicants and approximately 300 Baptized Members. By July 1st, 1931, the new Rector could discover only 118 Communicants and 189 Baptized Members. On August 15th, 1934, when his resignation became effective there were 306 Communicants and 524 Baptized Members. During that period there had been 60 Baptisms and 92 Confirmations. The Church School enrollment rose from 37 to 124 and the number of teachers from 4 to 18. The Church attendance during the third year of the Rectorship was double what it was during the first, and the number of Communion made tripled itself. The Rector's stipend in December 1930 was \$2600; in December 1933 it was \$1600. The number of Lay Readers increased from one to five; the number of organizations from eight to fifteen; members of organizations from 89 to 308; the Acolytes' Guild grew from one member to twenty-two. In October 1931 a monthly magazine (The Parish Herald) was inaugurated at no cost to the Parish. In 1933 this became a weekly paper.

This was a period of world-wide economic depression and Woodbridge was hard hit. At one time more than eight thousand out of the twenty-five thousand total population were on relief rolls. More than one-quarter of the parishioners were thus afflicted. In spite of this the spirit of sacrifice was evident in many ways. During 1933 members contributed more than they had pledged in the November 1932 Every Member Canvass. In the 1933 Canvass the amount pledged was an increase of 73% over the previous year.

During this rectorship certain material improvements were made. In the interior of the Rectory was painted and papered, and some new fixtures installed. The organ was completely reconditioned. The Church and Rectory driveways were resurfaced. Thirty-four stumps and dead trees were re-

moved, a like number of young trees planted, and the grounds generally made more attractive. The iron fence which encloses the four acres of Church property was painted. Red cassocks were purchased for the acolytes. The combination Parish House-Sexton's House underwent important alterations. The Parish Room was redecorated and hardwood floor laid. The remainder of the ground floor was for the first time given over to parish purposes. This added two rooms and a much-needed kitchen to the Parish House facilities. Curtains for the stage were installed. The upstairs was remodelled to form a modern five room apartment for the Sexton and his family. The outside of this building was repainted for the first time in years, and concrete sidewalks laid. The extensive improvements to the Parish House cost the parish treasurer less than a hundred dollars thanks to gifts of money, materials and labor.

The most noteworthy improvement of all was the installation of a new memorial stone altar complete with tabernacle (in which the Blessed Sacrament has since been reserved), dossal, and sanctuary lamp, executed by Fowler of Trenton. The Bishop of the Diocese, the Right Reverend Paul Matthews, visited the parish on November 27, 1932 to consecrate this altar. On this occasion the Bishop also formally instituted the Rector.

The present writer resigned the rectorship to become Chaplain of St. Mark's School, Southborough, Massachusetts. He was at once (August 16, 1934) succeeded by his friend, the Reverend Frederick Howard Klein, B. S., formerly curate of St. Luke's, Roselle, N. J. Father Klein's rectorship gives every promise of becoming memorable in the annals of the parish. The parish today is alive with enthusiasm and activity and the future looks bright indeed.

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A Copy of The Original Charter of Trinity Church, Woodbridge, N. J.

GEORGE The Third by the Grace of God of Great Britain France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith &c: To all to whom these presents shall come Greeting Whereas Sundry of our loving Subjects Inhabitants of the Town of Woodbridge in the County of Middlesex in behalf of themselves and others, have by their humble petition to our Trusty and welbeloved William Franklin Esquire, our Captain General Governor and Commander in Chief of our Province of New Jersey, set forth that they have erected a Church in our Town of Woodbridge aforesaid for preaching the Word of God, and Administering the Holy Sacraments according to the Doctrine and Liturgy of the Church of England, and have therefore prayed to be incorporated by the name of the Minister Church Wardens and Vestry of Trinity Church in Woodbridge, with full power to receive gifts and donations, to purchase Lands and Houses, and to make Leases, and such Rules and Orders for the Disposal of their Church Affairs, as shall be agreeable to the Laws and Customs of our Kingdom of Great Britain Know ye therefore that We willing to give all due Encouragement to the Professors of the Church as by Law Established in that Part of Great Britain called England; of our especial Grace, certain knowledge and meer Motion, have willed, ordained, constituted, given, and granted, and for us our Heirs and Successors do will ordain constitute give and grant That the Reverend Mr. John Preston the present Incumbent Samuel Jaques and Samuel Tingley the Present Church Wardens, David Alston, Esq. Thomas Hadden, Joseph Donham, and Ebenezer Forster, the present Vestry Men of Said Church and their successors for ever hereafter shall be one Body Politick and Corporate in Deed and in name, by the name of The Minister, Church Wardens, and Vestry Men, of Trinity Church in the Town of Woodbridge, and they and their successors by the name of the Minister Church Wardens and Vestry Men of Trinity Church in the Town of Woodbridge, one Body Politick and Corporate in Deed and in name, really and fully We do by these by these Presents for us our Heirs and Successors Erect ordain, Constitute, declare and create; and Also that they and their Successors Elected and Chosen as herein after directed by the name aforesaid, be and forever hereafter shall be, capable and able in the Law to hold Possess, sue for, recover and enjoy, any Lands, Hereditaments, or Real Estate, Already granted, or set apart for a Glebe, to the said Church, in the said Town of Woodbridge, upon the first settlement thereof, or at any time since and to have, take, receive and enjoy to them and their Successors, other Messuages, Lands, Tenements, Rents, Possessions; and other Hereditaments in Fee Simple, or for life or lives, or Years, or in any other manner, to the value of five hundred Pounds Sterling by the year, and Also Goods, Chattels and all other things of what kind or nature so ever, in Fee, and Perpetuity, so as the same exceed not at any time the Sum of ten thousand Pounds Sterling Money of Great Britain in the Gross, and that they and their Successors by the name aforesaid, be and forever hereafter shall be Persons able and capable in the Law to Sue and be Sued, Plead and be Impleaded, Answer and be Answered unto, defend and be defended in all Courts and Places before us our Heirs and Successors, and before all and any the Judges and Justices, Officers and Ministers of us our Heirs and Successors in any and all manner of Actions and Suits Complaints, Pleas, Causes, Matters and demands, of what nature or kind so ever, in as full and Ample manner as any other our Subjects can or may do; And also that the said Minister, Church Wardens and Vestry Men of Trinity Church in the Town of Woodbridge for the time being and their Successors, shall and may for ever hereafter have and use a common Seal, with such device or Devices as they shall think proper, for Sealing all and singular Deeds, Leases Grants Conveyances Con-

tracts, and all and singular other Instruments Affairs and Business, any way touching, concerning and relating to the Corporation, and the same to alter, change, and new make, when and as often as to them shall seem meet and convenient. And We do further of our Special Grace, certain knowledge, and meer Motion for us our Heirs and Successors Will ordain give and grant to the Minister or Incumbent of the Said Church for the time being, or in case of his absence or death, that the Eldest Church Warden for the time being, shall and may from time to time call a meeting of the Vestry when and as often as it shall be necessary, and they and their Successors for ever hereafter, being so met and assembled, shall and may constitute, ordain and make, Constitutions, Laws, and Ordinances, for the (one word cannot be deciphered) Governing and ordering of the affairs of the said Church, and the same from time to time repeal, as to them or the majority of them shall seem convenient, provided always that the said Laws and Ordinances so made be not repugnant to the Constitution of our said Church of England as by Law Established; And for the better and more regular Election of the Church Wardens and Vestry Men of the said Church for ever hereafter We do hereby further Will, ordain, give and grant, that the Minister or Incumbent of the said Church for the time being together with the Church Wardens and Vestry Men of the Said Church for the time being, shall assemble and Meet at the Said Church Yearly and every Year on Tuesday in Easter Week, and then and there by plurality of Voices Elect and choose two Church Wardens and so many Vestry Men as shall to them seem convenient not exceeding Ten in the whole out of the most discreet Persons of the Congregation of the said Church. And We do further of our especial Grace, certain knowledge, and meer Motion, for us our Heirs and Successors by these Presents give and grant unto the said Minister, Church Wardens, and Vestry Men of Trinity Church in the Town of Woodbridge aforesaid, that they and their Successors for ever hereafter All and singular the Rights Privileges Powers Capacities & Authorities herein before mentioned or Intended to be granted shall and may have hold and use, without the Impediment of us our Heirs and Successors, or of any of our Officers or Ministers whatsoever, of us our Heirs and Successors. And that these our Letters Patent or the Enrollment thereof from time to time, and at all times hereafter be and shall be, firm, valid, and effectual in the Law, towards and against us our Heirs and Successors, according to the true intent and meaning hereof and shall at all times be construed and taken in favour, and for the Advantage Profit and Benefit of the Minister Church Wardens and Vestry Men of Trinity Church in the Town of Woodbridge and their Successors for ever, as well in all Courts, as elsewhere, notwithstanding any defect, default or imperfection may be found herein, or any other Cause or thing whatsoever In Testimony whereof We have caused these our Letters to be made Patent, and the Great Seal of our Said Province of New Jersey to be hereunto Affixed, and the same to be entered of Record in our Secretaries Office in our Said Province Witness our Trusty and welbeloved William Franklin Esquire our Captain General Governor and Commander in Chief in and over our said Province of New Jersey and Territories thereon depending in America Chancellor and Vice Admiral in the same &c; at Burlington the sixth day of December in the Tenth Year of our Reign. Anno Domini One thousand seven hundred and sixty nine.

Pettit''

Written on back of the Charter:

"I have perused the within Charter and find nothing therein Contained inconsistent with his Majesty's Honor or Interest
5 Decr. 1769 Cort Skinner"

Words on the Seal attached to Charter:

"Georgius III D G MB FR ET HIB REX FD
BRUN ET LUN DUX etc SIG PROVINCIAE
NOSTRAE DE NOVA CAESAREA ET
AMERICA Dieu et mon Droit — Honi Soit
Qui Mal Y Pense"