

*An Historical Sketch
of the*

Diocese of New Jersey,

Protestant Episcopal Church.

New Jersey Diocese.

Prepared in Anticipation of the Celebration of the Sesquicentennial of the Diocese 1785-1935 ∞ Printed by order of the Permanent Joint Committee of twelve Clergymen and twelve Laymen



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The Sesquicentennial Celebration

IN ACCORDANCE with a recommendation made by Bishop Matthews in his address to the Convention of 1927, a Special Committee was appointed to consider the matter of observing the Sesquicentennial of the Diocese in 1935. The Committee made its report to the Convention of 1928 and the following resolutions contained in the report were unanimously adopted.

Resolved, that we observe the 150th anniversary of the Diocese of New Jersey.

Resolved, that the Diocese of Newark be invited to join in this observance.

Resolved, that other neighboring dioceses be approached for cooperation and coordination of their own observances.

Resolved, that part of the celebration be a Colonial Progress, and that an official of the S.P.G. be secured for the celebration.

Resolved, we recommend that a history of the Diocese be prepared at the discretion of the Bishop.

Resolved, that there be a Permanent Memorial of the 150 years of the Diocese in accordance with the suggestion of the Committee, namely—the establishment of an Anniversary Fund, the minimum of which should be \$1,000,000; which Fund is to be held by Special Trustees and the income from which is to be expended under the direction of the Bishop and the Cathedral Foundation.

Resolved, that the Diocesan Convention extend, through its delegation, an invitation to the General Convention to meet in New Jersey in 1934.

Resolved, that a permanent committee be appointed to carry out the plans for the Sesquicentennial Celebration.

If the General Convention shall accept the invitation of the Diocese to meet in New Jersey in 1934 it will be the second General Convention held in New Jersey, the first having met in St. Michael's Church, Trenton, in 1801.

In order that the Churchmen of New Jersey may more fully be informed as to the rich heritage they enjoy, the following brief historical sketch has been prepared by direction of the Permanent Joint Committee.

BISHOPS EXERCISING THEIR OFFICE IN NEW JERSEY
1702-1928

The Lord Bishop of London—Ordinary for the Colonial Period.
The Bishops of New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut—Occa-
sional Ministrations, 1787-1815.

<i>Diocesan Bishops</i>	
John Croes	1815-1832
George Washington Doane	1832-1859
William Henry Odenheimer	1859-1875
John Scarborough	1875-1914
Paul Matthews	1915-

<i>Bishop-Coadjutor</i>	
Albion Williamson Knight	1923-

SOME IMPORTANT DATES IN DIOCESAN HISTORY

The coming to New Jersey of S.P.G. missionaries	1702
Keith and Talbot	1702
St. Mary's Church, Burlington, founded	1705
Appointment of the Rev. John Talbot as permanent missionary at Burlington	1705
Fourteen clergymen meeting at Burlington petition S.P.G. authorities to extend Episcopate to Colonies	1719
Similar petition offered	
Outbreak of War of Independence and cessation of Church services, except sporadic ministrations	1776-1783
Churchmen representing three States meet in Christ Church, New Brunswick, to consider formation of National Church	1784
Beginning of Diocesan Organization	1785
Election of the Rev. Dr. Uzal Ogden as Bishop (confirmation refused by General Convention)	1798
General Convention meets in Trenton and "Establishes" the Thirty-Nine Articles	1801
Consecration of Dr. John Croes as first Bishop	1815
Consecration of Dr. George W. Doane as second Bishop	1832
St. Mary's School, for girls, Burlington, founded	1837
Consecration of Dr. William Henry Odenheimer as third Bishop	1859
Division of Diocese—New Diocese of Newark organized	1874
Consecration of Dr. John Scarborough as fourth Bishop	1875
Cathedral Foundation organized and incorporated	1913
Consecration of Dean Paul Matthews as fifth Bishop	1915
Election of Bishop Albion W. Knight as bishop-coadjutor	1923
Celebration of Sesquicentennial (1785-1935) approved by Convention	1928

The Beginnings of the Church in New Jersey

THE Church in New Jersey owes its existence and extension mainly if not exclusively to the initiative taken by "*The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.*" This Society, familiarly known by the initials S.P.G. or simply "The Venerable Society," was incorporated in London in 1701. Well up to the period of the Revolutionary War the clergy ministering in New Jersey were furnished and sent out by this Society and the correspondence of these with the home office supplies most of the information we possess regarding the religious conditions of those early times.

THE FIRST S.P.G. MISSIONARIES, KEITH AND TALBOT

At what date services according to the rites of the Church of England were first held in New Jersey cannot be precisely determined. There is no trace of the existence of any organized congregation in all New Jersey until it became a single Province by the union of East and West Jersey under Queen Anne in 1702.

George Keith, who had received Orders in the Church of England in 1700, became in 1702 the first missionary of the S.P.G. in the American Colonies. He prepared a memorial to the Society in the course of which he makes the following statement:

There is not one Church of England as yet in either West or East Jersey, the more is the pity; and except in Two or Three Towns there is no place of any public worship of any sort, but People live very mean like Indians. (See Hills, *History of Church in Burlington*, p. 19.)

One of these exceptions must have been Perth Amboy, which would appear to have had a missionary as early as 1698 in the person of the Rev. Edward Portlock who had been ordained and sent out by the Bishop of London. Portlock remained in Perth Amboy for a little over a year, holding services in a building which had originally

belonged to the General Proprietors of East Jersey. The parish was incorporated in 1718. (See Parker, *Historical Sketches*, "St. Peter's, Perth Amboy"; Jones, *History of St. Peter's*, pp. 17-22.)

In 1702 as agents of the Society, George Keith, accompanied by John Talbot, visited New Jersey. Keith preached first in Amboy in October 1702, and afterwards in other towns of East Jersey as also in the town-hall at Burlington in West Jersey.

THE REV. JOHN TALBOT AND THE CHURCH IN BURLINGTON

In 1702 the Church of England people in Burlington proceeded to organize a congregation and collect subscriptions for a building, and the cornerstone of a church was laid by the Rev. John Talbot, March 25, 1703, being the Feast of the Annunciation. In August of that year the building was sufficiently finished to permit of the holding of services and on the twenty-second of that month Keith on his return from the South preached the first sermon in it.

In 1705 Talbot was established as permanent S.P.G. missionary in Burlington, a position which he held until 1725 when he was inhibited on a charge of Jacobitism. He died in Burlington in 1727. Talbot was a man of great force of character and a devoted missionary. Through his efforts a church was built in Hopewell Township of which the successor is St. Michael's parish in Trenton. (See Schuyler, *A History of St. Michael's Church*.) Other missions were also organized by him and came under his fostering care. He is rightly regarded as the Father of the Church in New Jersey.

EARLY APPEALS FOR THE EPISCOPATE

Measures looking towards the securing of the episcopate for the Colonial Church were taken early in the eighteenth century, and similar efforts continued well up to the outbreak of the War of the Revolution. None felt this need more strongly than Talbot, and in season and

out of season for twenty years he labored for this consummation.

On November 2, 1705, there was a meeting in Burlington of the clergy of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, at which an address was drawn up, signed and sent under cover to the Lord Bishop of London. The petition setting forth the need for a Suffragan Bishop resident in the Colonies was addressed:

To the most Reverend fathers in God, the Lord Apps., the Right Reverend the Bishops and other Right Honorable members of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

The document set forth in detail the weighty reasons that moved the petitioners in making their request. The address was signed by fourteen clergymen and was delivered in person by Talbot when he went to England in 1707, but nothing came of the matter.

Again in 1719, another petition on the subject of providing a Bishop for the Colonies was drawn up by Talbot, and signed by many, but again nothing was done. Talbot paid another visit to England in 1720, returning home in 1722. It was during this two years sojourn that he is said to have sought and obtained consecration from the non-juror Bishops but whether this were the case or no the matter has no practical significance, since he never publicly claimed nor exercised episcopal prerogatives.

Notwithstanding these repeated failures to get the Anglican authorities to act in the matter of providing a Bishop for the Colonial Church, the pressure still continued, and from time to time petitions and appeals were sent setting forth the disabilities which the lack of a Bishop caused, and the great advantages which the presence of one would entail, but all to no effect. Had a Bishop been sent to the American Colonies in those formative times it is probable that today the Episcopal Church would have been the largest religious body in the country.

COLONIAL PARISHES

Up to the outbreak of the War of the Revolution nineteen parishes and missions had been established in New

Jersey. All but three of these are today within the geographical limits of the present Diocese of New Jersey, Trinity Church, Newark, St. James', Knowlton, now Delaware, and Christ Church, Newton, alone belonging to the new Diocese of Newark. These parishes and missions were all manned by clergymen sent out and at least partially supported by the S.P.G. It may not be generally known that the Rev. Samuel Seabury, subsequently the first Bishop of the American Church, began his clerical career under the S.P.G. in New Jersey, being in charge of Christ Church, New Brunswick, 1756-1758. In most cases the missionaries served several stations in their immediate vicinity, services being only occasional in the smaller places. The dates of the foundation of the Colonial parishes cannot always be definitely fixed. Moreover services were often suspended for a protracted period owing to the lack of clergy and for the duration of the War of the Revolution regular ministrations ceased everywhere and the churches except in one or two instances were closed to worshippers, often being used for barracks and sometimes desecrated and despoiled, while the clergy for the most part as conscientious loyalists suffered untoward privations and sometimes active persecution.

Up to a period immediately preceding the War of the Revolution the growth of the Church in New Jersey if slow had been steady. In 1774 the Rev. Dr. Chandler of St. John's, Elizabeth, reported to the Venerable Society that the Church was in a much more flourishing condition than it had ever been. With the outbreak of the war this bright outlook was changed and it would seem that the life of the Church was permanently ruined.

THE S.P.G. WITHDRAWS ITS HELP

In 1779, it is stated "that there has been a total cessation of public worship in the Provinces of New Jersey and Pennsylvania."

From this time the S.P.G. withdrew all its missionaries, and the Church in America was henceforth deprived of

the "nursing care and protection" which for three-quarters of a century had been so generously given.

POST-WAR CONDITIONS IN NEW JERSEY

The post-war task that now confronted the faithful remnant of what was formerly the Church of England in New Jersey was a colossal one. Parish organizations were disrupted, congregations were depleted or alienated, public services had been intermitted for long periods, and above all there was a great scarcity of clergy. Moreover the war had left a legacy of popular dislike and prejudice in respect to the Church which it took years to overcome. The period succeeding the close of the war, say from 1785 to 1815, represents a critical epoch of the Church's life in New Jersey. No longer could assistance be expected from outside sources. It was henceforth a case of "help yourself or perish." But those that loved the Church and had faith in its future were not without hope. Hostilities had hardly ceased before efforts were made to bring Churchmen together with a view to the resuscitation of the Church's life.

SIGNIFICANT MEETING AT NEW BRUNSWICK, 1784

The movement to constitute one Episcopal Church for the whole United States was begun at an informal meeting of Churchmen from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, held at Christ Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey, May 11, 1784. The meeting was called specifically for the purpose of considering the affairs of the "Corporation for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of the Clergy," which had been founded in 1769, for the benefit of the three Provinces represented at the meeting. It had become necessary, in view of the changed conditions, to revise the charter of the society, and to arrange for an equitable division of the funds. There were present at this meeting representatives from each of the three States. The Rev. Dr. William White, rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, Chaplain of Congress and subsequently Bishop of Pennsylvania, presided. An informal

discussion ensued as to the plans necessary to effect a unity among the churches. No definite action, however, was taken at the time, but a committee was appointed to attend a convention in New York which should be composed of representatives of the clergy and laity in the different States. Thus the initiative towards the foundation of a United National Body took place in New Jersey and led to the holding of the first General Convention in Philadelphia and the establishment of the Church in America as an autonomous body.

THE FIRST DIOCESAN CONVENTION, 1785

The first Diocesan Convention in the State of New Jersey met at New Brunswick, July 6, 1785, and consisted of three clergymen and fourteen laymen. There was a second sitting at Perth Amboy the following year, May 16-19, and a third sitting at Burlington, September 28-29. In the course of these three sittings *Rules and Regulations* were adopted the general lines of which furnished the future constitution of the Church in the Diocese of New Jersey. It was not, however, until 1815 that the Diocese had a Bishop of its own. During the intervening period the Church in New Jersey had to depend for episcopal ministrations upon such occasional services as could be rendered by the three Bishops, who had received consecration abroad, and were thus constituted to perpetuate the American succession.

A PERIOD OF SLOW GROWTH

The growth for the first thirty years was painfully slow. The insufficiency of clergy to man parishes and missions, the depletion of congregations, owing to the elimination of the loyalist element, which had previously constituted the main financial and social strength of the Colonial Church, and the apathy due to the long interruption of the public services, were all serious handicaps to the Church's life.

At the Diocesan Convention of 1790, the presence of only five clergymen is recorded, a like number in 1791,

eight in 1792, six in 1793 and also in 1794, four only in 1795, three only in 1796, in 1797 four, the same number in 1798, and five in 1799. In that year thirteen parishes were represented by lay delegates. As late as 1814 there were only seven clergymen resident in the Diocese.

THE GENERAL CONVENTION OF 1801 MEETS IN
ST. MICHAEL'S, TRENTON

The first and only General Convention of the Episcopal Church ever held in the State of New Jersey assembled in St. Michael's Church, Trenton, September 8-12, 1801. The House of Bishops at that time numbered only six members. Of these Bishops only three were present, viz.: White of Pennsylvania, Clagett of Maryland, and Jarvis of Connecticut. Nineteen clerical deputies were in attendance, representing seven States: Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland; and nine lay deputies in all, from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland. The secretary of the House of Bishops was the Rev. Henry Waddell, then rector of St. Michael's Church.

The president of the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies was the Rev. Abraham Beach, D.D., formerly during the war period rector of Christ Church, New Brunswick, and its secretary was the Rev. Ashbel Baldwin, Chaplain to Congress. The sermon was preached by Bishop White at the opening service held on Tuesday, September 8.

THE CONSECRATION OF THE REV. BENJAMIN MOORE, D.D.

During this convention, the Rev. Benjamin Moore, D.D., rector of Trinity Church, New York, was consecrated Bishop-Coadjutor for the Diocese of New York, at a service held on Friday, September 11, in St. Michael's Church.

THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES "ESTABLISHED"

The most memorable action which was taken by the Convention was the "Establishment" of the *Thirty-nine Articles* on September 12. If the reader will turn to the back of the Book of Common Prayer of present use, he

will find the *Thirty-nine Articles* printed as an appendix. The Title Page will show that the same were "established" by action of the General Convention in 1801.

NEW JERSEY OBTAINS THE EPISCOPATE, 1815

New Jersey was the ninth State to receive a Bishop of its own, and this not until twenty-seven years after the episcopate had been secured for the American Church. No wonder that the Church's life in New Jersey languished. The marvel is that it should have contrived to survive at all. It is a truism that a body cannot function apart from its head, and the Church in this Diocese had no head, for the first thirty years of its independent existence.

AN ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO SECURE A BISHOP

An abortive attempt to obtain a Bishop had been made as early as 1798: An "adjourned convention" was held in New Brunswick, August 15, 1798, "for the express purpose of deliberating on the expediency of electing a Bishop." Seven clergymen were present and lay deputies from twenty-two congregations. The choice of the Convention fell upon the Rev. Uzal Ogden, D.D., rector of Trinity Church, Newark. The House of Deputies of the General Convention of 1799 refused to confirm the election on the ground of doubt as to its regularity. A subsequent convention of the Diocese declared the "election regular in every respect" but the House of Deputies of the General Convention of 1801 refused to recede from its position.

BISHOP JOHN CROES

The Rev. John Croes, D.D., then rector of Christ Church, New Brunswick, and treasurer of the Diocese, was elected Bishop at the annual Convention held in St. Michael's Church, Trenton, August 30, 1815. He was consecrated in St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia, Sunday, November 19, 1815. His consecrators were William White, Presiding Bishop, John Henry Hobart, Assistant Bishop of New York, and James Kemp, Suffragan Bishop of Maryland.

Dr. Croes Previously Elected to Connecticut.

Only two months previously, Dr. Croes had been elected to the episcopate of Connecticut. And while the committee of that diocese were in correspondence with their Bishop-elect in regard to his support, consecration and removal, the Convention of New Jersey elected him with great unanimity to the episcopate of that Diocese. New Jersey was his home, and with two mitres before him he took the one which would allow him to remain among his old friends. (See Beardsley, *History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut.*)

The new Bishop had been connected with the Diocese of New Jersey since 1792, when he became rector of Trinity Church, Swedesborough. In 1801 he was called to Christ Church, New Brunswick, of which he remained the rector until his death, July 30, 1832, in the seventy-first year of his age.

A native of New Jersey, he exercised his whole ministry here, both as priest and Bishop, for forty-two years. Thus it was no untried and unknown man who was chosen to lead the Church, but one who had lived and labored in the immediate field for many years.

BISHOP GEORGE WASHINGTON DOANE, 1832

On the death of Bishop Croes the Rev. George Washington Doane, then rector of Trinity Church, Boston, was elected second Bishop of New Jersey. He was consecrated with three others, namely, the Rev. John Henry Hopkins, for Vermont, the Rev. Benjamin Smith, for Kentucky, and the Rev. Charles P. McIlvaine, for Ohio. The services were held in St. Paul's Chapel, New York, on Wednesday, October 31, 1832. Bishop White of Pennsylvania, the presiding Bishop, was the consecrator. The new Bishop made his home in Burlington and in conjunction with his episcopal office also held the rectorship of St. Mary's Church. Doane had a commanding presence, together with a capacity for almost infinite work, and attracted all classes; he was a polished writer, a graceful poet, and an impassioned speaker. He is universally admitted to have been one of the great Bishops in the history of the American Church.

THE BISHOP: A HYMN-WRITER

Bishop Doane was the author of many hymns, two of which are among the best known and most prized in our Hymnal, and indeed of world-wide fame, viz.: *Softly Now the Light of Day*, and that great missionary hymn, *Fling Out the Banner, Let It Float*. He was an ardent friend of the Missionary Cause and to him is due the recognition of the principle that the Church itself is the One Missionary Organization and that every member is by virtue of his baptism a pledged supporter of missions. He was the founder of St. Mary's Hall, Burlington, in 1837, the second oldest Church School for girls in the country. Bishop Doane passed away at his home in Burlington, April 27, 1859, and was buried in St. Mary's churchyard.

BISHOP WILLIAM HENRY ODENHEIMER, 1859—

THE DIVISION OF THE DIOCESE, 1874

Bishop Doane's successor was the Right Rev. William Henry Odenheimer. It was during his episcopate that the division of the Diocese took place in 1874, Bishop Odenheimer choosing the northern portion, the present Diocese of Newark, as his see. He died in 1879 and was buried in St. Mary's churchyard at Burlington.

BISHOP JOHN SCARBOROUGH, 1875

The Diocese of New Jersey chose the Rev. John Scarborough, then rector of Trinity Church, Pittsburgh, as its fourth Bishop. He was consecrated at Burlington, February 2, 1875. Bishop Scarborough enjoyed a long and fruitful episcopate, serving the Diocese for nearly forty years. He was an able administrator and indefatigable worker. Under his benign rule the Diocese grew and prospered. He will long be affectionately remembered for his genial nature and fatherly ways. He died in 1914 and was buried in Riverview Cemetery, Trenton, in which city he had lived during his entire episcopate.

BISHOP PAUL MATTHEWS, 1915

The Fifth and present Bishop of New Jersey, the Right

Rev. Paul Matthews, was consecrated on St. Paul's Day, January 2, 1915, in St. Mary's Church, Burlington. During his episcopate the work and resources of the Diocese have greatly advanced, particularly in the matter of organization and the development of institutional life. The Cathedral Foundation, implying not a material fabric but the consolidation of Church Work for the four departments of Missions, Religious Education, Social Service and Field (Nation-wide Campaign), has been established to the great benefit of the diocesan life. The need of an assistant to share the burden of these numerous activities soon began to be felt and in 1923, Bishop Albion Williamson Knight, who for some time previously had been serving as a temporary assistant, was chosen Bishop-Coadjutor.

SOME DIOCESAN STATISTICS FROM THE JOURNAL OF 1928

Number of Parishes and Missions	188
Number of Clergy Canonically connected with the Diocese	160
Number of Church Edifices	180
Number of Communicants	31,596

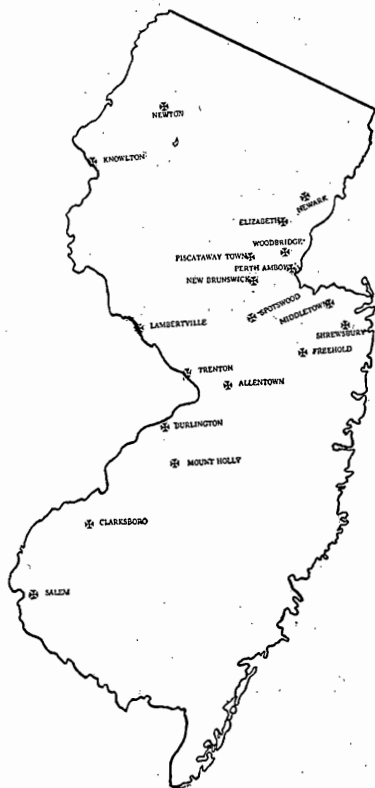
Financial

Diocesan Expenses	\$18,379.85	
Pension Fund	22,626.75	
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Total		\$41,006.60
Parochial Expenses, current	\$486,334.36	
Parochial payment of debts, interest and improvements	412,029.47	
Parochial expenses, other purposes	114,802.19	
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Total		\$1,013,165.92
Endowments—Diocesan	\$ 490,032.47	
Parochial	1,436,024.00	
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Total		\$1,926,056.47
Total value of Church Property		\$10,176,306.00

Nation-Wide Campaign

General Missions, including deficit	\$72,924.00	
Diocesan Missions, including all Departments	53,801.61	
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Total for 1927		\$125,725.61

Traditional Dates of the Foundation of Nineteen Colonial Parishes and Missions



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| St. Peter's, Perth Amboy, 1685 | St. John's, Salem, 1725 |
| St. Mary's, Burlington, 1702 | Christ, Allentown, 1730 |
| Christ, Shrewsbury, 1702 | St. Peter's, Freehold, 1736 |
| Trinity, Woodbridge, 1702 | St. Andrew's, Mount Holly, 1742 |
| Christ, Middletown, 1702 | Christ, New Brunswick, 1743 |
| St. Michael's, Trenton, 1703 | *Trinity, Newark, 1746 |
| St. John's, Elizabeth, 1703 | St. Peter's, Spotswood, 1756 |
| St. James', Piscataway Town, 1704 | *Christ, Newton, 1769 |
| St. Andrew's, Lambertville, 1716 | *St. James', Knowlton, Del., 1769 |
| *Since 1875 in diocese of Newark | St. Peter's, Clarksboro, 1770 |