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CELEBRATION

OF THE

CENTENARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,  
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PERTH AMBOY, N. J.,

" Centennial celebration  
committee,

July 4th, 1876.

WITH  
ADDRESS OF MAYOR WILLIAM PATERSON,  
AND  
HISTORICAL SKETCH BY J. L. KEARNY.

PERTH AMBOY, N. J.  
HENRY FARMER, BOOK AND JOB PRINTER,  
1876

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# CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

IN

PERTH AMBOY, NEW JERSEY,

JULY 4TH, 1876.

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The ceremonies with which the Centennial Fourth was ushered in and celebrated were conducted with great success, and made this the most impressive public demonstration ever witnessed in Perth Amboy. Bunting was profusely displayed from almost every building in the city, from the humble cottage to the mansions of the wealthy; from the saloon to the steeples of the houses of Divine worship; everywhere there was a manifestation of patriotism and enthusiasm in harmony with the occasion and bearing witness to the general desire to honor the event.

By authority of a resolution of the Council passed May 1st, the Mayor called a public meeting of citizens on the evening of May 26th, for the purpose of taking steps to secure a proper celebration of the 4th of July. At this meeting, the Mayor presiding, the following gentlemen were appointed a committee to make arrangements: E. H. Hall, Patrick Convery, C. L. Parker, J. G. Garretson, J. H. Tyrrell, W. N. Weidner, A. B. Smith, John

Fothergill, Wm. King, Jr., Geo. H. Tice, J. L. Kearny, Evan Thomas, Thomas Macan.

The committee organized by appointing Mr. Eber H. Hall, Chairman, and C. L. Parker, Secretary. The work of preparation was then divided up among sub-committees, and subscriptions were solicited from the citizens to enable the committee to carry out a programme such as they thought worthy. The Council appointed Messrs. S. G. Phillips, Frank S. Mead and Thomas Langan, a committee to co-operate with the Citizens' Committee.

In accordance with this programme, the church bells were rung and a Federal salute of thirteen guns was fired at midnight of the 3d. This was renewed at sunrise. At noon a salute of thirty-six guns was fired, and at sunset another of thirty-eight guns, accompanied also by the ringing of the church bells, the blowing of steam whistles and the continuous popping of pistols and firecrackers.

The parade commenced about

nine o'clock A. M., and a very effective and unique procession marched through the principal streets to the music of the Citizens' Cornet Band, under the leadership of Mr. Adam Eckert.

The Grand Marshal, Capt. John H. Tyrrell, was early on the ground and gave constant attention to those desiring to participate in the parade. His aids were Mr. James L. Comp-ton, and Mr. George H. Tice.

The procession was composed of the joint committee of sixteen, on horseback, the readers, the composer of the historical sketch, Mayor and Council, clergymen, aged citizens, Police Force under charge of Chief Flaherty, Lawrence Lodge, No. 51, I. O. O. F., Knights of Pythias, Ancient Order of Hibernians, a large delegation of the Danish and other Scandinavian population of the city, and a general display of the store-keepers and business interests generally in wagons gaily decorated with flags and bearing emblems, tools, or manufactured articles appropriate to the respective trades represented.

Nearly two hundred children from the public school were also in the line, their wagons being preceded by a Temple of Liberty drawn by four horses. The Goddess of Liberty stood in the centre and surrounding her were school girls representing the thirteen original States. The other twenty-five States were massed in a wagon immediately following the temple.

The names of the Goddess and her progeny of States are as follows :

Godless of Liberty, Jennie Wait.  
 Maine, Jennie Foster.  
 New Hampshire, Pauline Martin.  
 Vermont, Grace Naylor.  
 Massachusetts, Alice Laforge.  
 Rhode Island, L. Donnelly.  
 Connecticut, S. Livingstou.  
 New York, Emma Dally.  
 New Jersey, Jennie Hare.  
 Pennsylvania, Mary Martin.  
 Delaware, Lizzie Robinson.  
 Maryland, Olivia Hughes.  
 Virginia, L. Wood.  
 West Virginia, H. Shaffer.  
 North Carolina, Flora Slaughter.  
 South Carolina, C. Vannoy.  
 Georgia, J. Palmer.  
 Florida, Ella Martin.  
 Alabama, Irene Parker.  
 Mississippi, Hester Faron.  
 Louisiana, Emma Meshrow.  
 Texas, J. Garretson.  
 Arkansas, Maggie Meyers.  
 Tennessee, Emma Fligen.  
 Kentucky, Euphemia Pierson.  
 Ohio, Sarah Segulwe.  
 Michigan, R. Eggerts.  
 Indiana, J. Haggerty.  
 Illinois, Amelia Segulne.  
 Wisconsin, Virginia Griffin.  
 Iowa, Ida Tyrrell.  
 Missouri, Clara Buchanan.  
 California, Clara Tether.  
 Minnesota, Lillie Tether.  
 Oregon, Nellie Segunne.  
 Kansas, Beulah Conklin.  
 Nevada, Caddie Dally.  
 Nebraska, Carrie Wait.  
 Colorado, Gussie Livingston.

The general appearance of the procession was highly creditable, and while many important interests were not represented at all, there was enough to show that the business and enterprise of the city were growing rapidly.

The procession passed down High street to Long Ferry, up Water to Smith street, thence through State to Washington street, and returned to the park by way of High street. Here it was dismissed and the crowd gathered under the shade of the trees on the park to listen to the exercises there to take place, the band, in the meantime, playing patriotic pieces.

Mayor Paterson having been designated presiding officer, that gentleman, after some preliminary remarks referring to the occasion, addressed the assembly as follows :

## ADDRESS OF MAYOR PATERSON.

When the Declaration of Independence about to be read in your hearing, was under consideration, and many of the most earnest and sincere friends of American freedom doubted the expediency of such a measure, one of its warmest and most enthusiastic advocates, whose sanguine expectations seem almost to have been prompted by the gift of prophecy, after pledging himself to stand or fall with the fortunes of his country, and with the weal or woe of that momentous hour, assured the Continental Congress that the day which ushered that charter into existence would be celebrated on each annual return with bonfires and illuminations, and be welcomed by the hosts of American patriots with feelings of exultation, of gratitude and of joy.

We are standing now in the midst of scenes which more than realize the truth of that memorable prediction. The picture which came up before his mind, when he beheld through the dark gloom of that present the dawning brightness of our future destiny, it is ours to see delineated in glowing colors, and as it were by magic art. The grandeur of the conception is lost in the moral sublimity and splendor of the realization which crowns and closes the first cycle of one hundred independent years. He lived to see the half roll round, and fifty years thereafter, upon the very day when he thus spake the utterance of his heart, on the anniversary of the auspicious natal day that gave a continent to freedom, his spirit, with that of the immortal author of the immortal charter, passed from among the sons of earth. Then there were no telegraphic wires to flash the startling news that John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, prime movers in the Revolution, second only to him who stands confessed the first among his peers, who each had

been President and Vice President of the grand Confederacy of States that owed its all of life to them, had died, the one in Virginia, the other in Massachusetts, on the 4th day of July, 1826. Nor was there then so much as one of the iron rails on which the iron horse, with flaming breath and lightning speed, now traverses the continent from sunrise shore to sunset sea, almost annihilating time and space. A few yet can remember when the old Troy built post coach went on its lumbering way, sounding the horn on going out at morn and coming in at eve. And that was how one summer afternoon, a few days subsequent to the annual celebration, there came and broke among our hills the word that one of these had gone the way that all the living go. The next, and it was known that Monticello's Sage had drawn his last of nature's breath, and both upon the anniversary just then gone by. And so the flag was raised half mast upon the village pole and the bell of the old church upon the village green, its clear white spire then and still a monument for miles around, within the walls of which, almost as plain as those which held the manger where the Saviour lay, the chosen leader of our armies, George Washington, had worshipped with the simple pastoral flock in the dark days of trial and of fear—that bell tolled out a mournful dirge. And fifty years again roll on and steam develops power and use before unknown, and Franklin's great discovery of light and life runs round the continent and under seas, and distances once measured by the month are counted by a few short hours, and teeming wealth, almost in every form, is drawn from out the bowels of old mother Earth, and civil war has stirred the depth of angry passion and peace has come again to calm the bitter strife; in short wonder succeeds to wonder. And not the least surprising of such wonders is that with memories

and associations like these rising up around, it is proposed in this centennial year, I am told in all seriousness, to remove or take from off the spot where now it stands, that hallowed ancient church, sacred to the memories of George Washington, and Timothy Johnes, and Albert Barnes, consecrated as it is by time and deeds of noble men and acts that speak their worth, just as the old South Church in Boston is to be desecrated and handed over to the god of golden bonds in spite of all the grand traditions gathering around its honored pile. Think of loyal Massachusetts, that always pays its bonds in gold, one year gathering the serried, surging hosts from far and near, at Lexington and Concord, to keep their memories green, and the next, in this centennial year, sending round a subscription paper, to save the tower of that old church standing out as a beacon on the same night when Paul Revere went forth with his tin horn to sound the warning note of danger. Where is the boasted propriety and glory of a centennial celebration and exhibition when relics like these, connected with revolutionary history, are thus dismantled? Why the most pronounced rebel of 1861 would cherish a greater regard and respect for his ancestral rebel of 1776, than is thus exhibited, and even the Pope of Rome, if the Vatican were on American soil, regardless of the Rock of St. Peter or the heresy of Luther and Calvin, would be Protestant enough to protest against the perpetration of such vandalism.

It was meet and fitting that these men should be pioneers in the cause of American Independence and freedom, and it was most meet of all, that having been honored to the full extent in life, they should pass from among the living upon the self-same day, the day they loved so well, and amid the exultations which the oldest of those patriarchs, fifty years before, had foretold it would be honored,

each murmuring the dying wish that the other still survived. But they were not the only ones who served their country well in that dark hour. New Jersey can count her stars among the glittering host. There was John Witherspoon, a covenanting canny Scott, scarcely naturalized in years, but to the manor born in heart and works, Boss of the college honored by the State in name, but in nothing else, it can be said with truth, who signed the Declaration with the halter as it were around his neck, with the rope's end almost in view, just dangling as it were above his head. And by his side stood two of his Boys, who did the self-same thing, their common mother then but in her youth, scarce past the age that makes a man in law, or nursing mother of a woman. One of these was Richard Stockton, who graduated in the first class of all her lengthened line, who was imprisoned here in the old jail, which some few like myself remember as standing in State street, and in which he contracted the disease which terminated his life. And so these three, father and sons, have made their note and mark for every coming time, and now are written down "among the few, the immortal names, that were not born to die." While just before three other of her sons had been with Montgomery at Quebec, one falling by the same shot that laid his leader low, another, afterward, Vice-President of the United States, then a stripling youth not twenty years of age bearing the body of his lifeless chief through sheets of flame and driving snow, from off the fatal field, and all upon that leader's staff. The history and the fame of these and others, some more, some less well known, is a part of that of our State and her institutions, and can be twined among the wreaths of this Centennial celebration. We can point to men raised upon our soil and nurtured in our schools who

were heroes in war and statesmen in peace, whose counsels aided in the success of arms and the securing of our liberties, and reared beside the pillar of our independence the rostral column and the triumphal arch.

And so the first Centennial comes and we are here to see. It breaks upon us in unclouded splendor, in the clear light of the rising sun, and the stars and the stripes still float as triumphantly as when one hundred years ago to-day they were hailed first as the heralds and harbingers of peace. The occasion, the celebration, the year, is one in a hundred, so hang out your flags and banners by the hundred. Let them wave in the light and before the breeze as they never waved before and never will again, until a century hence, the countless throngs who then shall crowd these States shall throw them up again. Shake out the flag in full and flowing folds. The flag is an emblem and a symbol, and men live and move and act and work by signs and symbols. Flags and music reach the great popular heart. What are armies without the accompaniment of the drum beat's roll, or the loud mouthed clarion's bray, amid the waving of banners and the streaming of ensigns. So shake out the flag and wrap the first Centennial anniversary up completely in silk and bunting. Let the child remember this day in his holiday sports. Let the youth remember it as he looks abroad on the fair inheritance that lies before him. Let the old—the old cannot forget. It will not return to this generation or the next, and we should make the most of it and the best of it. Let the bonfires and illuminations of the Massachusetts patriot burn higher and shine brighter when night shall follow day, and remember no one can wish the individual who participates in the festivities of this Centennial holiday so much even as one happy return of the same.

INVOCATION.

On the conclusion of the Mayor's eloquent address the following prayer was offered by Rev. J. M. Tuttle, pastor of the M. E. church of this city:

We thank Thee, O, God of Nations that we are permitted to see and enjoy this Centennial of our national Independence which has come with such manifest gladness. We praise Thee for the success that has crowned the history of our nation for the past hundred years. We adore Thee that our Union has been preserved notwithstanding the terrible storms of war; that its enemies have been defeated and that we enter upon the second century in the enjoyment of national peace, of civil and religious liberty. We thank Thee for the high state of Christian civilization with which Thou hast crowned the age; for free schools, a free pulpit and press and for a free and open Bible to influence the morals of the nation. Mercifully bless those here assembled and all similar gatherings to celebrate this joyous day. May nothing occur to mar the pleasure of this day of festivity, and may we all recognize Thy Providential kindness in permitting us to see this glorious day.

Thou seest this great nation with its millions rejoicing in Thy great goodness. Let the spirit of praise come up before Thee as an acceptable offering. Look with favor upon the President of these United States and all associated with him in authority. Give him and his Cabinet and the legislative and judicial departments of our government wisdom and purity of aim, that the greatest good may be the result of their administration. Save us from political corruption and oppression and may our rulers be men of wisdom and integrity, men who fear God and seek the good of the people. Bless the Governor of this State and of

every commonwealth in our Union. Continue to favor this land and may it remain an asylum for the oppressed of all nations. We pray Thee suppress vice and immorality and establish virtue and purity among all classes of society.

O bless us with every temporal, moral and religious good. Amid exciting political contests, may peace prevail and may such men be elevated to office who shall administer the government most wisely for this great people.

Save us from the power of internal enemies and foreign foes, from famine and war and the pestilence that walketh in darkness and wasteth at noon day," and may we praise Thee for Thy great goodness. Will the Lord aid those who participate in these exercises answer our petitions, accept our praise, pardon our iniquities and save us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

An excellent choir, under the direction of Mr. Alexander Kant, lent additional interest to the occasion by their excellent singing. After the prayer they sang the following Centennial ode:

WHITTIER'S CENTENNIAL HYMN.

Our fathers' God! from out whose hand  
The centuries fall like grains of sand,  
We meet to-day, united, free,  
And loyal to our land and Thee,  
We thank Thee for the era done,  
And trust Thee for the opening one.

Here, where of old, by Thy design,  
The fathers spake that word of Thine  
Whose echo is the glad refrain  
Of rended bolt and falling chain,  
To grace our festal time from all  
The zones of earth our guests we call.

Be with us while the new world greets  
The old world, thronging all its streets,  
Unveiling all the triumphs won  
By art or toil beneath the sun;  
And unto common good ordain  
This rivalry of hand and brain.

Thou who hast here in concord furled  
The war flags of a gathered world,  
Beneath our western skies fulfil  
The Orient mission of good will,  
And, freighted with love's golden fleece.  
Send back the argonauts of peace

For art and labor met in truce,  
For beauty made the bride of use,  
We thank Thee, while withal we crave  
The austere virtues strong to save,  
The honor proof to place or gold,  
The manhood never bought or sold!

Oh! make Thou us, through centuries long  
In peace secure, and justice strong;  
Around our gift of freedom draw  
The safeguards of Thy righteous law  
And, cast in some diviner mold,  
Let the new cycle shame the old!

The Declaration of Independence  
was then read by Mr. Simeon G.  
Phillips, after which the chorus sang

THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER.

O say, can you see by the dawn's early  
light,  
What so proudly we hail'd at the  
twilight's last gleaming,  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars  
through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so  
gallantly streaming:  
And the rockets' red glare, the bombs  
bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our  
flag was still there;  
O say, does that star spangled banner yet  
wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of  
the brave?  
On the shore dimly seen, through the  
mists of the deep,  
Where the foe's haughty host in dread  
silence reposes,  
What is that which the breeze o'er the  
towering steep,  
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half  
discloses?  
Now it catches a gleam of the morn's first  
beam,  
In full glory reflected now shines on the  
stream—  
'Tis the star spangled banner, Oh! long  
may it wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of  
the brave.

And where is that band who so vauntingly  
 ly swore  
 That the havoc of war and the battle's  
 confusion  
 A home and a country should leave us no  
 more?  
 Their blood has washed out their foul  
 footsteps' pollution.  
 No refuge could save the hireling and  
 slave  
 From the terror of flight and the gloom  
 of the grave:  
 And the star spangled banner in triumph  
 shall wave  
 O'er the land of the free and the home of  
 the brave.

Oh! thus be it ever when freemen shall  
 stand  
 Between their loved home and the war's  
 desolation  
 Blest with victory and peace may the  
 heaven-rescued land  
 Praise the power that hath made and  
 preserved us a nation.  
 Then conquer we must, when our cause  
 it is just,  
 And this be our motto—In God is our  
 trust!  
 And the star spangled banner in triumph  
 shall wave  
 O'er the land of the free and the home  
 of the brave.

#### HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The historical sketch of the city of Perth Amboy, written for this occasion by Mr. J. L. Kearny, was then read by Rev. Aaron Peck, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church.

Upon the Centennial of these United States of America it seems right and proper that we, the citizens of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, should in common with many sister cities, look back over the past century and consider the gradual steps and changes whereby we have arrived at our present condition. Not only in this State, but in the whole country there can be but few places whose history presents the same phases as does ours. But in its consideration we are not limited by any means to this century.

When in the course of human events it became necessary for our forefathers to dissolve forever the political bands which had connected them with Great Britain, and in the name of the good people of those colonies solemnly to declare them free and independent States, the waves of civilization had already for nearly a century dashed upon the shores of Ambo Point. For nearly one hundred years the struggle for existence had been going on here as elsewhere, and already the Red man had all but vanished from the forests of New Jersey.

Imperfectly as the expectations of the early settlers of Perth Amboy may have been realized during their lives, yet the wisdom of their choice of a location for a great city was never more apparent than now. There is not time at present to search for the causes of our slow development, but whatever they are they could not be foreseen.

In 1680 the superior location of Ambo Point, as it was then called, had attracted the attention of Lord Carteret, then Governor of the Province of New Jersey, but whatever plans for its future he may have formed were frustrated by his removal and subsequent decease. The new proprietaries, however, seemed to have fully appreciated its importance, for no sooner had they been installed than they announced their intention to build "a principal town upon a neck or point of rich land called Ambo Point, lying on Raritan River," the same being in their estimation "a sweet, wholesome and delightful place." For the purpose of erecting suitable houses they contributed twelve hundred pounds, and in a letter dated August 1683 Samuel Groom, Surveyor General under Thomas Rudyard, their first deputy governor, reports progress as follows: "Three houses are already built, and three others are ready to be set up; but workmen are scarce and often base, and if no help

comes it will be long ere Amboy be built as London is." We may presume that the desired aid was not forthcoming. These houses were eighteen by thirty feet, "with a double chimney, made," according to Groom, "of timber and clay, as the manner of this country is to build." Groom also laid out the town into one hundred and fifty lots, and took soundings of the channel from Amboy to Sandy Hook, sending a draft of both to England for examination. At his death, which occurred soon after, he left unfinished upon the stocks the first vessel built in East Jersey.

Governor Rudyard was superseded in 1684 by Gawen Lawrie, who fixed his residence at Elizabethtown, and at once began active operations here. Through him the Proprietaries bestowed upon their new town the name of Perth, in honor of James, Earl of Perth, one of their number.

The suffix "Amboy" arose from the gradual change of the original Indian name "Ompoge" to "Ambo," that to "Emboyle," that to "Amboyle" and finally to "Amboy." To Gov. Rudyard we are probably indebted for the width of our streets, for he laid out the town anew, and also established the ferry across the Raritan in connection with which was built the house known as the "Long Ferry Tavern," which is still standing. This was the first public house erected in Perth Amboy.

A grove of handsome locust trees grew upon the river-bank hard by, and was a frequent and general resort of the town folk, but the encroachments of the water have long ago obliterated it, in spite of efforts for its preservation. Lawrie was moreover directed by the proprietaries to remove the government of the Province to Perth Amboy with all possible expedition, and to see that the Council, Courts, Quarter-sessions and Assembly

be held there, and that all public business be brought thither, with a view to the promotion and encouragement of the settlement.

As early as March 1685 fourteen houses were erected, and the following December the settlement received an important accession in the shape of a shipload of Scots, who, driven from home by religious intolerance and civil persecution, set sail in the ship "Henry & Francis," and after a long and disastrous voyage arrived and anchored in our harbor. Of the two hundred of these people who had refused allegiance to the king and were banished, nearly one-half succumbed to the hardship, sickness and exposure consequent upon a voyage of fifteen weeks. The survivors met with a warm welcome, and were kindly received, also, by the people of Woodbridge, who contributed to their support during the winter. During the mutations of subsequent years it is not extraordinary (but still it is remarkable) that the names of the early settlers have disappeared from this section, and with them those of the Scotch immigrants. But it is curious, that of the families residing here even as late as the beginning of this century of Independence, scarcely any names remain. It is beyond the province of this sketch to go into the causes, real or probable, of this fact, and indeed the very existence of the fact itself now robs the search of much interest. But it may not be amiss to mention the names of those whose standing in the community entitles them to notice. Among these we find the Gordon, Lyell, Johnston, Sonmans, Willocks, Nevill, Harrison, Kearny, Farmar, Bland, Skinner, Barberie, Watson, Parker, Bartow, Sargant, Stevens and Bryant families, wherein were many individuals more or less noted for their connection with and prominence in the affairs of church and State. Nor were literature and the fine arts unrepresent-

mented, but time will not allow a recital of their deeds and achievements.

Of the first five Governors of the Province but little is known as to their actual residence in Amboy, and after the surrender of the Government to the Crown in 1701 the Governors uniformly resided in New York.

The first one who is known to have lived here was Robert Hunter. He was much esteemed for many excellent qualities, and his house stood upon the knoll south of St. Peter's Church.

It was from him that Perth Amboy obtained her first charter, dated August 24th, 1718, its title being: "The Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen and commonalty of the City of Perth Amboy." The officers bore, with a few exceptions, the same titles that they *now* have. The Mayor and three Aldermen constituted a quorum of the common Council, their laws and ordinances being submitted to the Governor for approval.

A common seal was instituted, and remains unchanged to the present day. The device thereon is a hunting horn and a ship; the former in compliment to Gov. Hunter whose family arms it was, and the latter presumably to typify the maritime importance of the city. The respective mottoes are "*Arte non impetu*" and "*Portus optimus*."

The charter privileges thus obtained no doubt led to some improvement in the place, but as reliable data are almost entirely wanting, no *correct* estimate can be formed as to its increase in wealth and population. In 1720, Gov. Hunter was succeeded in office by Wm. Burnet, who continued therein until his death nine years later. The next incumbent was John Hamilton, to whom the colonies owed the first plan for the establishment of Post Offices in America. He resided in the house standing near the bluff upon what is known as the "Lewis" or "Woodruff" place, and his remains

were interred in the hill just north of the Brighton House then used as a burying-ground.

His successor was Jonathan Belcher, who in turn gave place to Gov. Bernard, whose policy and course during his administration endeared him to the entire Province. His residence was the old Johnston house which stood upon the bank of the Raritan about half way between Long Ferry and Sandy Point. Gov. Bernard's transfer to Massachusetts, however, led to the appointment of Thomas Boone, who was installed with rather more pomp and ceremony than usual, the addresses of welcome and farewell being very flattering. He was soon removed, however, and his position filled by Josiah Hardy, a man of few words and prompt action, but his administration, too, was brief.

William Franklin, his successor, was the only son of the great Dr. Franklin, and became Governor of New Jersey at the age of thirty. His appointment created not a little dissatisfaction, notably among the Tory element which was always pretty well represented in Amboy. But young Franklin's administration seems to suffer not at all by comparison with those of his predecessors.

These were troublous times. In 1765, two years after his accession, the odious "Stamp Act" was passed, and though he appears to have exercised a praiseworthy prudence in his intercourse with the people, yet as the disaffection increased as each year brought its additions to the already heavy load of oppression, he found his position a very trying one. He had hitherto resided at Burlington, but in 1774 he moved to Perth Amboy and occupied the "Proprietors' House," until recently the "Brighton" and now the "Bruen House."

Meanwhile the war-clouds were gathering, and dissension for the first time crept into the Council.

Hitherto this body had coincided with the views of the Governor, but he, in the Fall of 1775, felt obliged to suspend from membership in it Lord Stirling, the latter having accepted a military commission under the Provincial Congress. From this time a palpable estrangement dates between the Governor and the Council, and so rapidly did it grow that all harmony of action ceased, and the former was left to face the rising storm alone. Writing about this period to the Earl of Dartmouth, Franklin says: "My situation is not a little difficult, having no more than one or two among the principal officers of government to whom I, even now, speak confidentially on public affairs."

The despatch containing this passage was intercepted by Lord Stirling, who took measures to prevent the possible escape of Gov. Franklin, although nothing goes to show that the latter had any such intention. Not long after this he was arrested by authority of the Provincial Congress and upon refusing to give his parole was placed under guard and taken to Burlington to await their pleasure, and here ends his official connection with Perth Amboy.

By this time the city had become an important centre, not only from the fact that it was the seat of Government and the residence of the principal royal officers, but on account of its commanding military situation, of which both parties were fully aware.

In December 1775 two New Jersey Provincial regiments were organized, and a company under Captain Conway marched down from New Brunswick and occupied the "Barracks," since owned by the Andrews family. It may be interesting to know, just here, that these buildings were erected in 1759 by the Provincial Government, at a cost of £2,600 or about \$13,000. The space between the Barracks and the turnpike was used for a

parade ground, and was enclosed by a high board fence and shaded, until 1832, by numerous tall poplar-trees.

Captain Conway's force was soon strengthened by a regiment under Captain Longstreet, and a company under Captain Howell, and all found quarters at the Barracks.

Meanwhile the colonial officers continued nominally in possession of their respective posts, and several months passed without any open act of hostility or breach of peace. But in April, a portion of the 3d Regiment of Jersey troops arrived and at once began to throw up earthworks.

Encouraged by the arrest of Governor Franklin and the desertion of Amboy by a number of the adherents of the royal cause, there was a more active display of organized resistance to British rule.

About the end of Jun the appearance of Sir William Howe with a large force on Staten Island, decided General Washington in his intention to form a camp at Amboy and General Hugh Mercer was put in command. Troops were at once ordered here and several armed whale-boats and vessels were disposed along the front of the town.

It was at this period that a British war brig, carrying twelve guns, came up and anchored west of Billop's Point. During the night the Americans mounted an eighteen pounder behind the breastworks near St. Peter's Church and at daylight opened such a hot fire upon the brig that she was obliged to retire. Her retreat was covered by the guns of another English vessel which lay east of the point, and by a shot from her the tombstone at the grave of Captain Bryant was broken and the Church itself hit.

The resolutions of Independence by the Continental Congress were received by the New Jersey Convention July 17th, and referred to Messrs. Mehelm, Ellis &

Paterson, who reported the following resolution :

“Whereas, The Honorable Continental Congress have declared the United Colonies free and independent States, we, deputies of New Jersey, in Provincial Congress assembled, resolve and declare that we will support the freedom and independence of said States with our lives and fortunes, and with the whole force of New Jersey.”

The die was cast and the patriots were now prepared to abide the issue. The next hostile act occurred July 24th, when an American battery of four guns fired upon two sloops on their way from Staten Island to Sandy Hook. No damage seems to have been done to them, but the cannonade provoked a reply from the British artillery on Billop's Point, “which lasted for an hour.” The casualties on our side were two; a man confined in an upper room of the Courthouse, and a horse which was killed in High street near the town pump. Single shots from muskets and rifles were often fired across the Sound, and now and then, either from precision or by chance, one would be effective.

During the summer a want of proper vessels prevented the Americans from undertaking any aggressive operations at Amboy on a large scale, but after the failure of the famous conference in the Billop House on Staten Island between Lord Howe and the Committee from Congress, there were several successful raids and sorties made upon the British on Staten Island.

But nothing of much moment took place, and in November 1776, when Washington began his retreat through New Jersey, the troops at Amboy were withdrawn and joined his army.

The English immediately took possession of the town, which, as well as New Brunswick, they retained until July 1777. Both of these places, however, were so closely watched by the Americans and

the intervening country was so full of scouts and skirmishers that communication was rendered extremely hazardous and for a long time entirely cut off.

New Brunswick was finally evacuated June 22d, 1777, the British retreating to Perth Amboy where they embarked and proceeded to the Chesapeake, leaving the town and indeed all New Jersey in quiet possession of General Washington during the remainder of the war.

On the 12th of April, 1779, commissioners appointed by General Washington and Sir Henry Clinton met here to make arrangements for the exchange of prisoners, after which the Revolutionary history of Perth Amboy presents little of interest and nothing of importance.

The growth of Perth Amboy since the Revolution has been so disproportionate to the time elapsed, that a recital of even the principal events would be little more than a catalogue of disappointed hopes and unfruitful anticipations. What progress she *has* made, it ill becomes her *citizens* to boast of, and, since her *marked* improvement has taken place within the last five or six years, it is scarcely yet a subject for history.

But nevertheless this is historic ground whereon we stand, and around us we still behold the monuments of the past. *There* stands our City Hall, modernized and metamorphosed to be sure, but within its massive walls were born the patriotic sentiments that fired the hearts of Jerseymen a hundred years ago! Other buildings are in sight no less antique, which promise to outlast many a modern structure. Even so shall last the names of those who fought and died in hardship and privation that *we* might live in peace and plenteousness.

At the conclusion of the reading the reverend gentleman was loudly applauded. The National hymn “America” was then sung by the

choir, in which the whole assembly joined.

AMERICA.

My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing ;  
Land where my father died,  
Land of the pilgrims' pride,  
From every mountain side,  
Let freedom ring.

My native country, thee,  
Land of the noble, free—  
Thy name I love ;  
I love thy rocks and rills,  
Thy woods and templed hills ;  
My heart with rapture thrills  
Like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,  
And ring from all the trees,  
Sweet freedom's song ;  
Let mortal tongues awake,  
Let all that breathe partake,  
Let rocks their silence break,  
The sound prolong.

Our fathers' God, to thee,  
Author of liberty,  
To thee I sing ;  
Long may our land be bright  
With freedom's holy light ;  
Protect us by thy might,  
Great God our King.

The Rev. A. R. Walker, rector of St. Peter's Church, pronounced the benediction, and the people dispersed to their homes.

In the evening there was a display of fireworks on the commons north of Smith street, where a large concourse of people gathered to witness the display.

Everything passed off harmoniously and happily, no casualty or accident occurring to mar the memory of the day.