THE PROVINCIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY
OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,
1753–1783.

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(Continued from Vol. XLVII, page 356.)

VII.

RECTORSHIP OF DR. JENNEY AND THE
"INTERREGNUM," 1762.

The first Rector of St. Peter's Church was Robert Jenney, who came to the Colonies as a missionary from the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, about 1722. He was later licensed minister to Christ Church by the Bishop of London and took up his duties there in November, 1742. He was ably assisted at the time St. Peter's was opened by William Sturgeon. Sturgeon had also come out to the Colonies under the patronage of the Society for Propagating the Gospel and in October 1747 became assistant to Mr. Jenney.

The Vestry in 1759 realized that their Rector had only a short time to live and was then practically incapable of going on with his duties. All the work fell on William Sturgeon, who could not possibly undertake alone the duties of both churches, when St. Peter's would be finished. In February of that year, one of their number, Jacob Duché, informed them that his son was expected to return in the near future from Claire Hall in Cambridge, where he was studying for orders. The Vestry thereupon decided to recommend him to the Bishop of London.

In this letter the vestry explained the "paralytick

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* Dorr, 282.
* Minutes 8 Nov., 1742.
* Ibid., 7 Feb., 1759.
and asthmatic” condition of Dr. Jenney and how William Sturgeon was forced to carry on the duties of both “which are now very great.” They went on to tell about the new church, and said “by this short narrative of the state of our affairs your lordship will easily perceive that we shall be in want of more ministers to serve in these churches. . . . Seeing therefore that Doctor Jenney is like to remain, as above mentioned . . . we humbly pray your lordship’s influence and pastoral care towards getting Mr. Jacob Duché, Junior . . . admitted into holy orders and that your lordship will also license him to officiate as an assistant minister in the churches of Philadelphia. . . .”

This request was complied with and on September 27th, 1759, Jacob Duché Jr. was received “as one of the assistant ministers to the churches.” He had been brought up in Philadelphia and was in the first class to receive a degree from the College of Philadelphia, in May 1757. He immediately became popular with the congregations and Richard Peters writes, “He [Duché] is so deservedly in the esteem of the members of our own as well as other Congregations for the piety and goodness of his life and the strong and lively manner in which he enforces the great doctrines and duties of Christianity.”

Robert Jenney only lived four months after St. Peter’s was opened. He was buried on January 10th, 1762, in the aisle in front of the chancel of Christ Church. Provost Smith preached the sermon at the funeral.

Upon his death Duché and Sturgeon were appointed to act as ministers of the United Churches, “during

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89 Vestry to the Bishop of London, 7 Feb., 1759. Ms. draft in Christ Church Tower Vault, Drawer 11.
90 Minutes 27 Sept., 1759.
92 Smith: Works I, 22.
the pleasure of the Vestry.”

This arrangement continued until June of that year when Duché decided to go to England to receive priest’s orders. Hitherto he had been only a deacon. Peters was asked to officiate in his place during his absence.

It was necessary for both Duché and Sturgeon to be licensed in their new positions as “ministers” of the united churches by the new Bishop of London, Richard Terrick. Therefore the Vestry wrote high recommendations for both of them to the Bishop of London, which Duché carried with him.

When he returned to Philadelphia in December of that year he found Richard Peters had been chosen Rector in his absence, and he and Sturgeon were again assistant ministers. Sturgeon was still unlicensed by the new Bishop.

This election, nevertheless, met with the approval of the youthful Duché and the elder Sturgeon, for the former realized he was much too young for such a responsible position and the latter was failing in health rapidly. Both joined in the hearty recommendation of the Vestry on Peters’ high moral character and abilities sent to the Bishop of London.

The first election of officers by pew-holders in St. Peter’s and Christ Church occurred on Easter Monday, 1762. Henry Harrison and Alexander Stedman were chosen Wardens. Joseph Sims, William Bingham, William Plumsted, Thomas Willing, Edward Duffield and Townsend White were the Questmen.
Vestrymen elected were Evan Morgan, John Kearsley, William Pyewell, Jacob Duché, Charles Stedman, James Humphreys, Redmond Conyngham,* Peter Sommans,* John Ross, Joseph Redman, James Child, and Peter Turner.*

VIII.

FINANCIAL TROUBLES, 1761-1771.

St. Peter's had no trouble filling her pews. Three days after the opening, the Vestry, meeting in the new church, made a resolution, that on account of the great demand for pews, no person who "is accommodated with sittings in Christ Church shall have liberty to choose a pew or sitting in St. Peter's Church" until they have given up the former.\textsuperscript{100}

The building committee went ahead with completing the church edifice, although they already had expended more than they had received in subscriptions. Many of the subscribers found they were unable to pay all they had promised and after St. Peter's was built, it was next to impossible for the committee to collect subscriptions.

On March 5th, 1763, they reported to the Vestry that St. Peter's "is now happily finished (the pulpit and chancel excepted)." They had expended the sum of £4,765, 19s, 6½d. to "sundry persons employed in erecting and building the said church including the purchase money of a lott of ground for the use of said church." The receipts through donations and subscriptions "from sundry pious and well disposed persons" only amounted to £3500, 14s, 6d. This left a debt of £1265, 5s, which the committee had expended out of their own pockets. They concluded the report by asking that the balance due them be paid out of the money arising from the Church funds. This proved to be easier said than

\textsuperscript{*} Members of St. Peter's congregation as far as can be ascertained.

\textsuperscript{100} Minutes 7 Sept., 1761.
done. The Vestry, however, were not discouraged, for at the meeting at which the above report was made, they agreed to erect an organ in St. Peter’s, provided, however, that it or the organist should not be a “charge to the churches until the debt for building St. Peter’s” was paid.\footnote{Minutes 5 Mar., 1763.}

The accounts of the committee were duly audited and found correct, and it was resolved that the Church funds should be “mortgaged” for the payment of the debt owed to the committee, with interest. For the time being, however, nothing was forthcoming except a vote of thanks to the committee and “particularly to the Treasurer, Mr. Joseph Sims, for their care, industry and management of the whole affair.”\footnote{Ibid., 30 Mar., 1763.}

The committee to whom this vote of thanks was rendered was composed of Jacob Duché, James Child, William Bingham, James Humphreys, William Plumsted, John Wilcocks and the Treasurer, Joseph Sims.

The income of the churches was derived from the pew-rents and box collections, and the salaries that were paid naturally had to be small. The clerk of St. Peter’s, William Cartwright, who took John Harrison’s place at his resignation in 1762, received only £25 per year,\footnote{Ibid., 22 Apr., 1762, and 11 Apr., 1763.} and the bell-ringer at St. Peter’s was to be paid £10 a year.\footnote{Ibid., 19 Apr., 1763.} The assistant ministers, Sturgeon and Duché, received £150 and £155, respectively, a year.\footnote{Ibid., 8 June, 1762.}

Things began to look fairly black in April of the following year when Robert Smith presented a bill for money still due him for the building of the church and “likewise a fresh debt” arising from the building of the pulpit. The Vestry decided that they should make another effort to collect the moneys which were still
unpaid on the former subscriptions. They appointed Thomas Willing, Redmond Conyngham and James Humphreys a committee to collect new subscriptions, but it was in vain.

In June Smith, the builder, presented still another bill for £285, 13s, 3d, for the pulpit reading desk and chancel rail, but the Vestry could not meet it. Five months later, October 30, 1764, they resolved that the wardens pay out of the church fund, “so soon as the money shall come into their hands,” £100 to Smith in part payment of his account.

Thus things went from bad to worse and this unmanageable debt hung over the beautiful new church like a dark cloud. By January of the next year the debt had grown to nearly £1500 and the Vestry in desperation decided to resort to a lottery. Christ Church had used this method of raising money to build her steeple in 1752–3 so that a precedent had been established. In those days lotteries were not looked upon as a form of gambling, and were very common. Just at this time, the Churchmen in the towns of York and Reading wished to raise £300 each to build churches by lottery, and it was thought best to have one scheme for the three lotteries. Therefore a petition was made “To the Honorable the Representatives of the Free-men of Pennsylvania in Assembly met” by the Vestry and Church Wardens of the United Congregations of Christ and St. Peter’s Churches to allow them to raise a lottery of £2,250.

106 Minutes 3 Apr., 1764.
107 Ibid., 13 June, 1764.
108 Ibid., 30 Oct., 1764.
109 Ibid., 7 Jan., 1765.
110 Ibid., 27 Oct., 1762.
111 The evil became so bad in the 1830's, lotteries were abolished by Act of Legislature. For conditions in Philadelphia see McMaster: History, VII, 153–6.
After stating the reasons for building St. Peter's the petition goes on to say that

"It being considered that public buildings may be rendered among the chief ornaments of every city and that the said . . . Church would be of lasting use to the public, it was determined to erect it in a commodious manner with as much elegance as might be consistent with plainness and simplicity.

"That the members of the Church of England determined to defray the expense . . . being unwilling to have recourse to Lotteries which were then frequent. . . .

"That a neat and convenient Church called St. Peter's had been accordingly built . . . at the joint expense of the members of both congregations who had raised upwards of 3,600 pounds. . . . But by the sudden rise of the price of materials and labour, your petitioners, find they still lie under a heavy debt of near 1,500 pounds . . . which debt they have no prospect of being able to pay by further contributions. . . .

"That under these circumstances your petitioners found that they had no other resource but to apply to the Legislature for aid by way of Lottery. . . ." Here is inserted the proposition of the Churchmen in York and Reading and goes on to say, "Your petitioners therefore trusting in the good disposition of the Honble House towards . . . the Church established in the mother country humbly pray for leave to bring in a Bill to enable them, by way of Lottery, to extricate themselves from said debt, and . . . to allow the said congregations of York and Reading to be joined in the scheme . . . , we would further pray that the sum to be raised may be 2,500 pounds. . . .

"Signed in behalf of the Congregations of Christ Church and St. Peter's Philadelphia, Jan. 8, 1765." 113

Charles Stedman
Edward Duffield—Wardens.

This Bill allowing a lottery for the sum of £3,000 to be known as "St. Peter's & Church Lottery" was passed,113 and plans were immediately begun to launch it. Tickets were printed and sold. One of these now hangs in the Vestry room of St. Peter's and reads

ST. PETER'S &C CHURCH LOTTERY

1765
Numb. 11759
This ticket entitles the Bearer to such Prize as may be drawn against its Number if demanded in Nine Months after the Drawing is finished; subject to such deduction as is mentioned in the Scheme
I (signed) Hen Harrison

112 Draft in Vestry minutes 8 Jan., 1765.
A worse time for promoting the scheme could not have been chosen. The British Parliament had just passed the fatal Stamp Act, March 1765, and the Philadelphia merchants were already drawing up a non-importation agreement (November 7, 1765). Prices rose rapidly and people were not in the mood for lotteries. By December the Vestry voted that the United Churches, just incorporated under their new Charter, take eight hundred tickets "to hasten the drawing," and tickets "No. 801 to No. 1600 inclusive, excepting No. 1264 supplied by No. 420, all signed Jacob Duché" were accordingly procured.

Henry Harrison, the manager of the lottery, had just died, and another bill had to be passed by the legislature before a new manager could be appointed. This all took time and the day of drawing drew near. Finally an "Act to prolong the time limited for drawing the lottery, etc.," was passed in February (1766) and a new manager appointed.

A few days later, the surviving members of the building committee, Jacob Duché, Alexander Stedman, Joseph Sims and William Bingham, who were under bond for the payment of £900 with interest for the building of St. Peter's became worried over the apparent failure of the lottery. They plead with the Vestry, now a "body corporate" to do something about it. Whereupon they resolved that the Corporation "will take care" that the £900 with interest shall be paid them.

Every possible means was tried to raise a little money. A Mr. Josaiah, who refused to give up his seat in St. Peter's, which a Mrs. Venables and others were

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114 Minutes 31 Dec., 1765.
115 Ibid., 21 Jan., 1766.
117 Minutes 25 Feb., 1766.
"rightly possessed of some time past," was told by the Church wardens that he must forthwith pay his subscription of £15 towards the building of St. Peter's and to pay for the whole pew or "he will not be permitted to sit there any longer."118

The final day of drawing the lottery (May 27, 1767) found the managers with more than 2000 tickets on their hands, and the Vestry with their 800 tickets, in a panic. They tried to sell as many as possible of these 800 on the final day119 but with what success is not known.

The actual result of the scheme is unknown, but on June 21st, 1768, "Mr. Robert Smith, the Carpenter" is again on their trail. "He says these accounts have been delivered a long time ago, and prays . . . that he may no longer be kept from the money" that is due him. The Vestry here appointed a committee "to examine and settle" the accounts.120 Nevertheless, not until 1771 was this account finally settled and the £900 bond paid off.121 Thus after a decade of very embarrassing financial troubles the dark cloud was removed from St. Peter's and the Church could now start out with a clean slate. That this was possible seems to be due to the generosity of, and careful management of the Church funds by the Rector, Richard Peters, to whom the Vestry, in desperation, turned over all funds in 1766. At the same time he very generously refused to take any further salary until the debt should be paid.122

118 Minutes 7 Aug., 1766.
119 Ibid., 27 May, 1767.
120 Ibid., 21 June, 1768.
121 Ibid., 8 Apr., 1771.
122 Ibid., 2 Dec., 1766.
IX.

RECTORSHIP OF RICHARD PETERS, 1762–75.

Richard Peters was born about 1704 in England. When quite young he was sent to Westminster School. While there he is said to have contracted a clandestine marriage, under the influence of drugs, with a maid servant, but refused to acknowledge the legality of it. Upon hearing of her death he married a Miss Stunley, but later finding his first wife was still living came to America. He had previously taken orders. For a long time, political adversaries never let him forget his early marriage.

Peters was elected Rector of the United Churches on September 12, 1762, and in December the Vestry sent him the following letter:

"To the Rev. Richard Peters,
Reverend Sir,

We the church wardens and vestrymen of the united congregations of Christ Church and St. Peter's in the city of Philadelphia, beg leave to return to you our most sincere thanks for the services done us in the absence of Mr. Duché by performing every part of your ministerial function to the great satisfaction of our congregations and of us in particular. We now address you on a matter of very great importance to the churches of this city. We have from a past sense of your abilities, but above all for your zeal in the cause of religion, your knowledge of and warm attachment to the Church of England, been induced unanimously to appoint you rector of our churches; and we trust from your candor and goodness, as well as from the many good offices formerly done us, that you will be pleased to grant us our request. May the smiles of heaven attend you in all your pious labours, is the prayer of &c, &c. . . .

December 6th, 1762" 124

Peters had already been connected with Christ Church as assistant minister under Archibald Cummings in 1736, but owing to a disagreement which arose

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124 Dorr, 134.
between them he thought fit to decline "continuing to give his assistance." He was prominent in public affairs for many years, twenty-odd years Secretary of the Land Office, and appointed Secretary of the Province and Clerk of the Council February 14, 1742-43. He had been warmly championed as Cummings' successor but the conservative members of the Vestry had defeated his election. By 1762, he had amassed a considerable private fortune, with which he was always most generous.

He showed great interest in the building of St. Peter's, and in Jacob Duché's absence, had practically run the parish. He was glad, therefore, to accept the call as rector, but made the stipulation in his acceptance that he be allowed to go to England for a year "where the affairs of my family call for my presence." He did not go, however, until 1764.

He took up his duties as Rector immediately upon his acceptance, but he had fairly rough sailing for a while. The finances, as we have seen, were in very bad shape, and it took him eight years to straighten them out and redeem the "honour of the Churches." The new Bishop of London, Dr. Terrick, did not seem to be as well disposed toward the Philadelphians as Thomas Sherlock had been. The Bishop censured Sturgeon severely for an "irregular marriage" which he had performed, and did not wish to grant either Peters or Sturgeon licenses as Rector and assistant without their going to England in person to receive them. While this was required by the strict rules

125 Minutes, 1736-7, and letters in Perry, II.
127 Keith, 239.
129 Minutes 8 Apr., 1771.
of the church\textsuperscript{131} the Vestry in recommending him had said that they realized "it is Mr. Peters' duty to wait upon your lordship, and he is very desirous of doing it, but as we are circumstanced, his absence would be very detrimental to our churches; therefore we most humbly request, since your lordship's license in the usual form cannot be obtained, that you would be graciously pleased to signify your approbation of our choice . . . by a letter under your own hand and seal to Mr. Peters himself. This practice we can assure your lordship has been heretofore observed by your pious predecessors."\textsuperscript{132} The Bishop gave his approbation, but insisted upon Peters coming to England to be licensed.\textsuperscript{133} He, therefore, remained unlicensed until his trip abroad the following year.

Sturgeon was not only in disfavour with the Bishop but also with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, which had originally sent him to the Colonies and from which he still received a salary of £50 a year as "catechist to the negroes." The Society through some channel or other heard that he had been neglecting his negro pupils. When confronted with the charge, the old man, overworked with his church duties, plead with the Vestry to appoint a committee to "examine into the matter."\textsuperscript{134} The committee headed by the Rector reported on April 27, 1763, that they had examined several persons "respecting the catechising of the negro children" and that they had found that Sturgeon had not neglected his duty as catechist for the Society, and had "once a week, and sometimes oftener, except when out of town, which was very seldom the case, duly catechised and instructed sundry negro children in the principles

\textsuperscript{131} Dorr, 143-5. William Smith to Vestry, London, June 4, 1763.
\textsuperscript{132} Vestry to Bishop of London, 1762. Dorr, 135 (date not given).
\textsuperscript{133} Bishop of London to Vestry, Fulham, 24 May, 1763.
\textsuperscript{134} Minutes 30 Mar., 1763.
of the said church. Witness our hands, etc.' This smoothed the matter over, but poor Sturgeon never received his license from Bishop Terrick, and resigned his office as assistant minister "in consequence of ill health" on July 31st, 1766.

Rev. George Whitefield was another of Peters' troubles. On his annual visit to Philadelphia in 1763, the congregation of the United Churches, through the Wardens, asked Peters to invite the evangelist to preach. The Rector was quite angry at their suggesting it, but on consultation with Duche and Sturgeon, and after Whitefield had paid him a "kind and polite" visit, he complied with the request. Peters did so, he said, only "to prevent dissatisfaction and displeasure." Whitefield by the middle of October 1763 had preached four times in St. Peter's and Christ Church. None of these sermons contained the "usual censures of the clergy," so that Peters changed his mind about him temporarily. The rector frankly wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury about the whole affair and received a blast in answer; consequently the next year, 1764, due to this "salutary admonition" he forbade Whitefield's preaching in either St. Peter's or Christ Church.

Still another matter which troubled Peters was the inconvenience caused by the lack of a charter for the United Churches. On account of this, difficulties arose in making contracts, etc., and individuals had to give

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135 Report of Committee to examine charges, etc., Ms. Christ Church Papers, dated 27 Apr., 1763.
136 A letter of the Bishop of London to the Vestry, 24 May, 1763, approved Sturgeon as assistant minister but would not license him without his going to England.
137 Minutes 31 July, 1766.
personal bond, which at times was embarrassing. As early as 1749 Christ Church had applied to Governor Hamilton for a charter. Peters was at that time the Provincial Secretary and handled the affair, but for causes which the minutes of the Vestry do not show the charter was not granted. One of the first things he did as rector was to start this ball rolling. On December 11, 1762, a committee was appointed composed of the Rector, Henry Harrison, Alexander Stedman, John Ross, and John Kearsley to prepare a plan for a charter.\textsuperscript{140} It was immediately drawn up, read before the next Vestry meeting and approved.\textsuperscript{141} This draft was sent to the new Lieutenant Governor, John Penn, and Peters wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury seeking his aid in having it granted.\textsuperscript{142} Fortunately, Penn thought it best to ask the Archbishop's advice on the subject and sent the draft to him. Peters decided that his "bad state of health" and "engagements to an absent branch of . . . [his] family" necessitated a trip to England, so he went over in 1764. While there he found the draft in the hands of the Archbishop.\textsuperscript{143} In reporting by letter to the Vestry on the subject he said that His Grace had made several objections to the charter, but that he had succeeded in removing them "in such a manner as did honour to my vestry and the congregation." He goes on to say that the Proprietaries, "who really love the church, were greatly delighted at the thing, and it was agreeable to their own judgment." Peters had then extracted a promise that the charter be sent by the next packet. It was found, however, advisable to make a few alterations on the original draft and the

\textsuperscript{140} Minutes 11 Dec., 1762.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 27 Dec., 1762.
\textsuperscript{143} Peters to Vestry, London, 17 Mr., 1765. Ms.
Charter was not received by the Vestry until June 28, 1765, with the above letter. The title of the Charter is as follows:

"Charter of the United Churches of Christ Church and St. Peter's Church in the City of Philadelphia, in the Province of Pennsylvania

Thomas Penn and Richard Penn, true and absolute Proprietaries of the Province of Pennsylvania, and counties of Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex, on Delaware, to all persons to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:"

After the exhaustive preamble, it creates into "one corporation and body politic, to have continuance forever," "The Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of the United Episcopal Churches of Christ Church and St. Peter's Church, in the city of Philadelphia, in the Province of Pennsylvania," to be known by this name.

It further declares that the "rector, church wardens and vestrymen and their successors, by the name aforesaid, shall forever be persons able and capable in law, to purchase, have, receive, take, hold, and enjoy" property within the Province of Pennsylvania, etc. It gives the corporation power to receive any bequests or gifts and to invest them.

It requires that the revenues of the corporation be "from time to time" applied for the support of the rector, ministers and officers of the Churches and for necessary repairs of the buildings, "church-yards and parsonage houses, and other houses which do now, or hereafter shall belong to the said united Churches or either of them, and to no other use or purpose whatsoever."

The corporation is required not to dispose of any property vested in them. They are given power to

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144 Minutes 28 June, 1765.
make rules and by-laws (provided they are not contrary or repugnant to the Laws of Great Britain or Pennsylvania) which are to be entered in the vestry book. It gives the corporation authority to use a seal of their own design and to sue in courts of Pennsylvania, etc.

The Vestry is to consist of twenty-two persons (two of which are to be church wardens) belonging to the United Churches to be elected every year on Easter Monday by a majority of only such members of the united churches who "shall appear by the vestry books to have paid, three successive years preceding the time of such election" for a pew or sittings. The Vestry is to choose its own officers and elect one church-warden. The Rector is to choose the other.

The Charter is signed by John Penn, lieutenant-governor of the Province of Pennsylvania, and dated June 24th, 1765.\(^{145}\)

Soon after this was received, the lots belonging to the churches, up to this time held by individuals of the Vestry, were conveyed to the United Churches.\(^{146}\)

The first Vestry under the new charter was composed of the following: Charles Stedman and Townsend White, Wardens; Joseph Swift, Joseph Sims, Joseph Stamper, Thomas Gordon, James Humphreys, William Bingham and William Plumsted, Questman; Edward Duffield, Peter Turner, Sr., William Pyewell, John Ross, Henry Harrison, Joseph Redman, Redmond Conyngham and Peter Sonmans, Vestrymen.

Peters remained in Europe from the fall of 1764 until December of the following year. While away, at the Rector's suggestion Provost Smith was asked to


\(^{146}\) Register of Real Estate of the United Churches, p. 12 and Minutes 7 Apr., 1776.
officiate occasionally at St. Peter's. Duché, however, probably attended to the needs of St. Peter's most of the time, while Sturgeon took Christ Church. About the time St. Peter's was being built, Duché's father, a vestryman, built a beautiful house for his son, on the north-east corner of Third and Pine Streets; opposite the St. Peter's lot. It was supposed to be copied after a wing of Lambeth Palace and was one of the finest houses in the city at the time. Young Duché lived there with his bride, Elizabeth Hopkinson, sister of his classmate and close friend, Francis Hopkinson. The location was ideal to attend to his duties at St. Peter's.

Things went fairly smoothly in regard to the new church during the Rector's absence. Trees were planted in the grave-yard by members of the congregation and were paid for from time to time from the church funds. This made the church grounds very attractive. Today the beautiful trees and grass plots with a soft red brick background give the appearance of an oasis in the glaring city, but then the neighborhood must have been very like the country. Watson in 1844 said that he had talked with a lady, then eighty-eight years old, who had picked blackberries at the corner of Fourth and Pine Streets.

The burial ground already had a number of graves in it. The sexton evidently dug the graves and kept a record of the burials each year. These records he presented to the Vestry with personal notes. The charge for "breaking ground" for a grave was seven shillings six-pence. Who the first sexton of St. Peter's was we do not know, but in 1764 "the Rector informed the

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147 Minutes 13 June, 1764.
148 Watson, I, 413; says, in 1844, "it was taken down a few years ago."
149 Minutes 13 Feb., 1775.
150 Watson, I, 484.
151 Mss. St. Peter's Papers in Christ Church Vault.
152 Minutes 19 Apr., 1763.
Board [vestry] that Mr. Samuel Kirk, who formerly served as Sexton to the Church, was again desirous of that office in St. Peter’s which was now vacant.” He was accordingly given the job. 153 The sexton was apparently quite an important personage and was styled an “officer.” In the Vestry minutes of April 11, 1768, there is an entry that among the “officers elected for the ensuing year” were William Young, Clerk of St. Peter’s and George Stokes, Sexton.

Stokes was evidently quite a character. He remained sexton until his death in 1793. From 1789 to November, 1793, he kept a record which he called “George Stokes’ Book for Recording The Interments in St. Peter’s Ground” which is a mine of amusing and interesting personal notes on persons buried, giving at the same time the exact date of burial, the name of deceased, age, cause of death and charge for grave. From this it can be established definitely that the first seven of eight Indian Chiefs, La Gese, Apautapea, Bigigh, Barkskin, Grand Joseph, Wapetee, Toma and Little Elk, buried in the Church-yard in January, 1793, died of the smallpox during the frightful epidemic of that year. The eighth, Little Elk was buried April 6th with no notation after his name other than “an Indian Chief.” The nations of the others are all given.

More valuable, even than this, is the first record of Pew Holders in St. Peter’s kept by Stokes. 155 In 1777 he was appointed “Collector of Pew Money for St. Peter’s Church with the usual commission.” 156 Apparently finding it difficult to keep track of the money owed, he started a Pew book in 1779 and made a new one out each year. Luckily the precedent thus established was kept up after his death. He paid out of his

153 Minutes 13 June, 1764.
154 For the duty of the Clerk see infra Chapter X.
155 Infra, Appendix A.
156 Minutes 6 Nov., 1777.
own pocket, without being reimbursed by the Vestry, the bell-ringer of St. Peter's. This was discovered in 1782, and the Vestry thereafter paid him. The first burial in the yard was that of Rosanna Smallman who died August 23rd, 1760, before the church was finished; her grave is at the south end of the ground, about half way between Third and Fourth Streets. Other early burials at St. Peter's were those of John Bingham, the fourteen-year old son of William Bingham, died November 8th, 1763, the first occupant of the later famous Bingham, Stamper, Blackwell, Willing and Francis vault at the southeast end of the Church; and of Sophia Maria Duché, baby daughter of the assistant minister, who died August 27th, 1762, and was buried "in the middle ayle of St. Peter's Church." The latter is the first record of intramural burials in St. Peter's, which it has often been said never occurred there.

On August 10th, 1765, William Plumsted, to whose interest and energy perhaps more than any other, St. Peter's owes its existence, died and was buried there. The inscription on his stone is very much obliterated but in 1878, Bronson could make out

"William Plumsted, Esq
An Eminent Merchant
An Alderman and some time Mayor of Philadelphia
Died August 10th 1765—Aged 58
whose public character
As a useful Citizen and Magistrate
Let his Country tell.
To thee O Mother ......................consigned
........................................... widowed wife
........................................... private life
Calls her with ....................this humble stone
Which holds his .................."

157 Minutes 24 July, 1782.
158 Parish Register. The tablet later erected on the East wall of the Church says "interred in this church near the pulpit."
159 Bronson, 54.
Another loss to St. Peter's occurred a few months before, January 22nd, 1764, when Robert Wilcocks died, and was interred there. 160

On March 26, 1765, it was decided by the Vestry to build a "shed" in the Churchyard "for keeping the Bier belonging to St. Peter's Church, and the spades and other utensils necessary for the Grave-digger." 161 This brick "shed" still stands at the south side of the yard and is used for the same purpose.

Another decision which the Vestry made during the absence of the rector was to raise the pew rents at St. Peter's. As we do not know the original rent it is impossible to tell how much they were raised but the new plan was as follows:

| Pews from No. 1 to No. 10 inc. being 60 sittgs. 2/6 ea. is | 7 10s |
| No. 11 " No. 26 " " 80 " 2/6 " " 10 — |
| No. 29 " No. 39 " " 72 " 5/ " " 18 10s |

| Opposite side of the Church the same |
| 30 |

| All front pews of the galleries being |
| 95 stgs. 5/ each is |
| 23 15s |

| 95 15s |

These figures are interesting as showing the rather high sums charged for "sittings" in those days, and also the desirable pews. The gallery pews today are not considered by any means the best, few being rented

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160 Wilcocks came to Philadelphia from Dublin, Ireland, and about 1740 married a daughter of William Dyer of Kent County, on Delaware. Dyer died in 1712 leaving a widow, whose daughter by a second husband was the mother of Francis Hopkinson. Willcocks had two sons, William (died June 28, 1756, aged 15, while a student at the College of Philadelphia) and John. The latter was an Ensign in the 18th, or Royal Irish Regiment on Foot; and died in Phila. in November, 1772, and was buried with his father. He bequeathed his estate to his kinsman, Francis Hopkinson.

161 Minutes 26 Mar., 1765.

162 Ibid., 11 June, 1765.
at all. Owing to the "considerable importance" of the matter, it was decided to defer putting the new plan into effect before the Rector's return. The first pew-book (1779) of St. Peter's in existence shows even higher rental than this was charged.

Upon the Rector's return in December, 1765, he found financial matters in a bad way and set about righting them as we have seen. His generosity in refusing to accept a salary until the debt was paid off was typical of his rectorship throughout. He gave £100 towards the purchase of a lot for a parsonage of St. Peter's, because as he later said "I suppose nobody will . . . contribute a farthing to the minister of St. Peter's, if ever separated" from Christ Church.

Upon Sturgeon's resignation in 1766, all the work fell on Duché and Peters, Duché probably still officiating at St. Peter's most of the time. This work, as Peters later informed the Vestry "was too heavy to be performed by any two persons," yet no other assistant was called for six years.

In February of 1768 "some bad people" invaded St. Peter's Church-yard and wantonly cut down many of the trees planted there. The Vestry and congregation were naturally much angered at this vandalism and inserted the following notice in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*:

"Philadelphia March 1, 1768.

"W heres some malicious and evil disposed persons, have lately cut down and destroyed several of the trees growing in St. Peter's Church-yard, Any person who will give information thereof to either of the

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163 About 1791-2 some double pews were divided and the numbering was changed to some extent.
164 Christ Church Vault, Drawer 15.
167 Minutes 19 June, 1772.
Church Wardens, so as the offender may be brought to justice, shall receive a reward of five pounds.

By order of the Vestry

{ William Bingham
{ James Humphreys

Church Wardens”\textsuperscript{169}

Whether they discovered the vandals or not is not known.

Up to this time (1768) the streets leading to St. Peter’s were not paved and the mud was “often so bad that people cannot come to church.” The Rector, Church Wardens and “such of ye members of Vestry as will join them” decided to do something about it, and accordingly laid a request before the Commissioners of the city that that part of the city be paved.\textsuperscript{170} We do not know definitely if they accomplished their object, but in 1768 a city lottery of £5250 “for further paving the streets” was launched.\textsuperscript{171} Scharf and Wescott say, “there is abundant incidental evidence about this time (1768) of the city’s rapid growth ’... ‘the street pavements were extended in many directions on Market, Chestnut, Penn, Pine and Vine Streets.’”\textsuperscript{172} It thus looks as if St. Peter’s was favored by the new lottery scheme.

Upon taking up his duties as Rector, Peters had resigned his Secretaryships, but remained a Councillor of the Province until his death. In September of this year (1768), although the vestry feared for his “state of health,” the Rector at the request of Sir William Johnson and the Governor, went to Fort Stanwix to aid “in the settlement of a boundary line between the Indians and His Majesty.” It was thought that “his long experience in Indian affairs would enable him to

\textsuperscript{169} Pennsylvania Gazette 10 Mar., 1768.
\textsuperscript{170} Minutes 16 Feb., 1768.
\textsuperscript{171} Watson, I, 214.
\textsuperscript{172} History of Philadelphia, I, 260.
be a great service there." During his absence Provost Smith promised to take his place.\textsuperscript{173}

Rev. William Smith was a warm friend of the United Church, but his duties as provost of the College took most of his time, and it was only due to the dearth of clergy in Philadelphia that he consented to undertake Peter’s pastoral duties when called out of town. The only other Anglican minister, besides Duché, in the city at this time was the Rev. William McClenaghan. He had been sent to the Colonies by the S. P. G., but had “withdrawn himself” from the Society’s service “in a manner that does him no credit.”\textsuperscript{174} He was a very popular preacher, however, and had been invited by the Vestry, apparently ignorant of his record, to become assistant minister in 1759,\textsuperscript{175} but owing to the strenuous objection of the Bishop of London and the S. P. G., their call was withdrawn. This was done in a rather brutal way. The letter from the Bishop’s secretary, flaying McClenaghan, was ordered read in the church, the following Sunday.\textsuperscript{176} In consequence of this act he withdrew from further connection with Christ Church, and with the aid of his large following, built and officiated in St. Paul’s Episcopal Church\textsuperscript{177} on Third Street below Walnut, a few years after St. Peter’s was finished. He was for a long time looked upon as an outlaw by members of St. Peter’s and Christ Church, and this controversy caused many bitter speeches and much hard feeling at meetings of the Vestry.\textsuperscript{178}

Provost Smith, therefore, was continually looking among his students at the College for candidates for

\textsuperscript{173} Minutes 5 Sept., 1768.
\textsuperscript{174} Samuel Nicols (Secretary to the Bishop of London) to Jenney, Sturgeon and Duché, London, Mar. 25, 1760. Dorr, 122.
\textsuperscript{175} Minutes 19 June, 1759.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 21 June, 1760.
\textsuperscript{177} Now the Philadelphia City Mission.
\textsuperscript{178} Minutes 1759–61.
orders, and in 1768, he found two young men who appeared to be promising material. They were John Montgomery and Thomas Coombe. Both had taken the degrees of Bachelor of Arts the year before and were then “standing for” their Master’s degrees. The former would not be twenty-two years old until August of 1768, while the latter was only twenty; yet a joint letter from Smith, Duché and Peters was sent to the Bishop of London highly recommending both and requesting Holy Orders for them, irrespective of age “on account of the necessities of the Church.”

Nothing came of it, however, until four years later.

In the following year (16 Feb. 1769) St. Peter’s lost another of its founders and loyal members, in the death of the wealthy merchant, William Bingham. He had been a vestryman ever since St. Peter’s was built and was chosen warden the year before he died. His wife was the daughter of John Stamper (also a member of St. Peter’s). They lived in the famous Bingham house known as the Mansion-house, between Walnut and Spruce Streets on the west side of Third Street. He was buried at St. Peter’s in the large family vault and above it on the exterior of the east wall of the church a modest tablet was placed in his memory, bearing the inscription

William Bingham
Departed this life Feb 16th A.D. 1769
Aged 46 years

His wife continued to go to St. Peter’s after his death, although up to 1772 she held a pew in both churches, contrary to the rules. The one in Christ

180 Watson, III, 270.
181 17 feet long and 12 feet wide “exclusive of the staircase.” Minutes 8 Apr., 1775.
Church was taken from her on March 19th of that year by a resolution of the Vestry "as she has a large double pew in St. Peter's."\textsuperscript{182}

In January 1772 Doctor John Kearsley died at the age of eighty-eight years. As early as 1719 his name appears as a vestryman of Christ Church, and "he continued to hold a seat in that body, for a period of fifty-three years; always taking an active interest in all the affairs of the church."\textsuperscript{183}

The question of assistant ministers was by this time a very urgent one, owing to the failing health and age of Richard Peters. Thomas Coombe and William White, another Philadelphian and graduate of the College, had been admitted "to full orders and licensed by the Bishop of London for this province." The Rector therefore urged the Vestry to call them "if ways and means could be devised to raise money for their support; the present revenues of the churches being barely sufficient to provide for the rector and Mr. Duché."\textsuperscript{184} This seemed impossible to do, as the average annual income for the past five years had been only £831. The Rector, nevertheless, was asked to find out from the men proposed, what salaries they would be willing to accept.\textsuperscript{185} This was done and both replied by letter that they appreciated the offer, but thought it was up to the Vestry to set the sum, before they could accept.\textsuperscript{186} White apparently changed his mind, however, for on November 30th, a letter was read from him to the Vestry saying he "would officiate in the churches" and "be always satisfied with what they can

\textsuperscript{182} Minutes 19 Mar., 1772. The Bingham Pew was old Number 47 (54 new Number) on the center aisle.
\textsuperscript{183} Dorr, 166.
\textsuperscript{184} Minutes 19 June, 1772.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 16 Nov., 1772.
\textsuperscript{186} Coombe to Peters, Nov. 21, 1772. White to Peters, Nov. 22, 1772. Dorr, 168–170.
afford to offer from the regular funds, and not expect to receive any part of what may be raised by some new way.” Whereupon the generous Peters said he would, as long as he continued Rector, give them each £100 a year out of his own pocket. It was then decided to definitely call Coombe and White, the former to have a salary of £200 a year, and the latter, “as he so generously and earnestly expressed his desire not to receive more than the church funds can allow,” was to receive £150.

Thus William White entered into connection with St. Peter’s as Assistant Minister, which connection was not broken until his death, sixty-four years later. He was the only minister of the Church of England of Philadelphia who remained loyal to the Colonies throughout the Revolution and was the first Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States, consecrated by the Archbishops of York and Canterbury, by a special Act of Parliament.¹⁸⁷

Three years later, 1775, Richard Peters, feeling he could now leave his parish in good hands, resigned his rectoryship “in consequence of bodily infirmities,”¹⁸⁸ having been Rector for thirteen years. He died nine months afterwards, July 10, 1776, at the age of seventy-two and was buried under the floor of Christ Church. His nephew and namesake, Justice Richard Peters, a Judge of the United States District Court for thirty-six years, remained a pew-holder¹⁸⁹ of St. Peter’s until his death in 1828. He was then buried in St. Peter’s Church-yard. Upon his death, a meeting of the bar of

¹⁸⁷ 26 George III L. J. XXXVII, 656–7; C. J. XLI, 933, 957. Samuel Prevoost was consecrated Bishop of New York at the same ceremony, but after Bishop White. Dr. Seabury had been consecrated Bishop of Connecticut two years before by the non-juring Bishops of Scotland. See White: Memoirs, 23.
¹⁸⁸ Minutes 23 Sept., 1775.
¹⁸⁹ 49 old number, 56 new number.
Philadelphia adopted a resolution in which it was said, "His [Judge Peters'] purity and integrity were never questioned. His industry, vigilance, fidelity and punctuality never failed. No suitor was denied or delayed justice. The poor and humble were protected in their rights, and wrong-doers, of whatever class, were restrained and punished."^{190}

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^{190} Scharf and Westcott, II, 1530.

(To be continued.)