

CHRIST CHURCH SHREWSBURY

HISTORY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2017

Christ Church, the Episcopal parish in Shrewsbury New Jersey, is an historic church. We were founded in 1702 and the church building's cornerstone was laid in 1769. The surrounding graveyard has stones from 1719. Our records date from 1733. We are an active church and add to our records and have new interments in the graveyard each year.

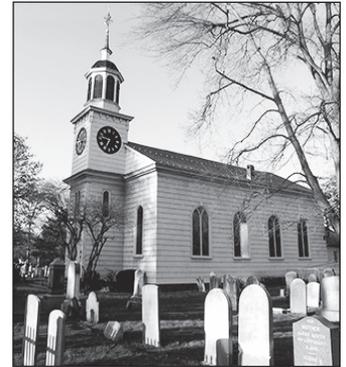
We pride ourselves on our stewardship of this treasure trove of history. The preservation of our history can be difficult with an organization whose principal charter is religious. We are committed to communicating our history beyond the parish walls since this is also the history of us all.

Each year we celebrate and share our history with the broader community in multiple forums. We also learn more about our history each year by studying our records and by receiving information from outside the parish frequently through genealogical inquiries.

I wish to tell you we are open to your interests and inquiries. Alas, the church cannot be open for visitors at all times, but with an appointment a tour can be



Christ Church, 1869 - Dorn's Classic Images



Christ Church, 2013 - Jeff Veil

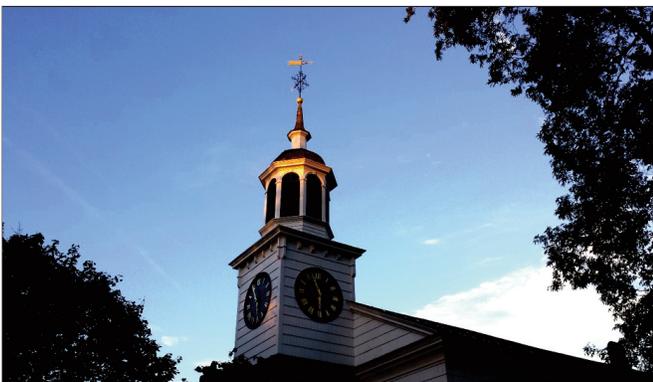
arranged at no charge. This can be accomplished by contacting us by e-mail at historian@christchurchshrewsbury.org or by calling the parish office at 732.741.2220.

Furthermore we are open to inquiries from genealogists who believe they have ancestors related to the church. These queries can be initiated by e-mail at the above address. In addition a capsule summary of our history can be found on our web site at christchurchshrewsbury.org

Robert M. Kelly, Jr., Parish Historian

The Clocktower and the Raffle

Are you aware that the clock tower was constructed with public funds? Well, if you knew of our clock tower raffle you do! That was conducted to raise monies for the clock tower repair and maintenance. Here is the background and history.



First, public funds do not mean governmental funds. The long-term position of the borough is that it could not provide such funds since it would be, or seem to be, support of a particular religion. (This could be debated but it is best to accept that position and move on as has been done for over 100 years.) Public in this case means funding by citizens, not necessarily parishioners. These citizens would typically be Shrewsbury borough residents.

The construction of the clock tower in 1874, including the relocation of the cupola from the roof of the church to the top of the 10 foot x 10 foot clock tower, was done by the Borden family led by Lambert Borden. The Bordens also took on the role of raising monies for this by means of "subscription". That is the term used in 1874 but is what we would

*Bvt. Maj. Gen'l Stewart Van Vliet,
Asst. Qr. Mr. General U.S.A*

*Headquarters Department of the Missouri
Office of the Chief Quartermaster*

Fort Leavenworth, Ks, May 8th, 1874

My Dear Sir:

*Your letter of the 4th April in reference to a
clock for the Episcopal Church is received.*

*It will offer me pleasure to contribute & you
can put my name down for \$25.*

*Though this is not my church, yet it is the
church of my family - I am a Quaker out &
out. And if the Friends Meeting House wants
a clock, I will subscribe freely.*

*?? to be remembered to Him. He is now taller
than I am & is one of the best shots in Ram-
sey?*

Yours

*Stewart Van Vliet
Francis Borden Esq.
Shrewsbury, NJ*

call a donation. The full details of how the 19th century fundraising worked and the construction itself have not emerged from research to date. On the fundraising side, we do have one specific record of this. This is in the form of a letter from Major General Stewart Van Vliet to Frank Borden in response to a letter requesting funds for the erection of the clock tower. General Van Vliet was a Shrewsbury resident but stationed in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas at the time. Here is the letter in its entirety. (There are a couple of words that are difficult to decipher in this handwritten note.)

One can conclude that Frank Borden was leading the fundraising and that other letters were sent, as well as making person to person requests. Note the pledged amount of \$25 is about \$528 in today's money. (We do not know the full cost of the clock tower construction.)

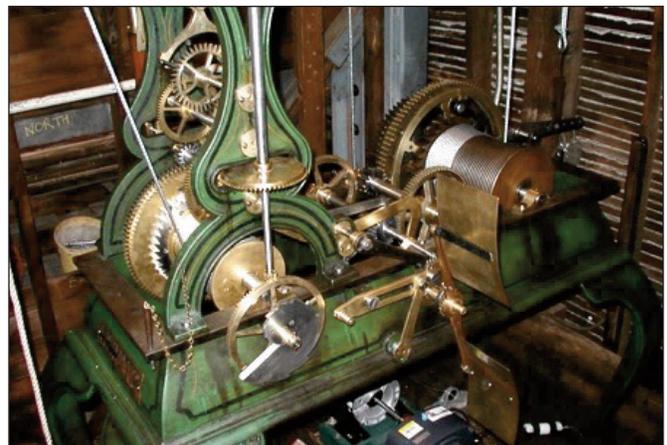
As we know the clock tower was successfully constructed. Note also that the cupola and spire were moved from the roof of the church, as seen in the 1869 photo, to the top of the clock tower. However, no provision was made for ongoing repair and

maintenance. Periodically, perhaps every 20-30 years, some significant work was needed and some fundraising was attempted. Records of these are somewhat spotty but here is what information to date has found, largely due to research by Louise Jost, founder of the Shrewsbury Historical Society.

1891- 1895 The clock mechanism with bell control has two winding mechanisms for the counterweights – one for the clock and one for the bell. These were manual operations that were required to be performed on a seven day basis. An individual named Clarence White did this task for years. When repairs were needed Mr. White paid for them himself. However some prominent citizens believed this to be inappropriate and once again raised funds to reimburse Mr. White. (Note that the bell counterweight winding has since been automated but the clock counterweight remains manual and is wound weekly by a team of parishioners dubbed the Clockwinders Guild.)

1933 The clock mechanism fell into such disrepair that the cable to the one ton bell counterweight fell two stories into the narthex through the narthex ceiling and damaging the tiles in the narthex floor. There are no records on how the subsequent repairs were funded.

1945 The church vestry authorized repair funding. Apparently the church petitioned the borough for some funds. In a letter from the Mayor, Alfred Beadleston, this request was denied, but the mayor did contribute \$25 out of his own pocket. A fundraiser was conducted this year as well. This was a two night performance by the Clock Faced Minstrels of the Shrewsbury Community Club that



E Howard #2 Clock Mechanism

raised \$600. Cable parts were donated by Roebling Brothers of Trenton.

1953 In an expenditure of governmental funds, the borough authorized the illumination of the north and west faces of the clock tower from the “telegraph” pole on the corner of Broad and Sycamore.

For the past 70 years repairs to the clocktower were funded primarily out of church monies. (In 2005 a County Historical grant defrayed some of these repair costs.) Since this is not the primary mission of the church, proper maintenance has not been able to be fully funded.

So, in 2016 a raffle was conducted that was run

jointly by the church and the Shrewsbury Historical Society. The drawing for the raffle took place at the Independence Day celebration at the Allen House across the street from the church. Tickets cost \$5 and there were three winners each of whom was entitled to a tour of the four-story clocktower.

Hopefully this type of fundraiser can be conducted annually to ensure an adequate source of clock tower maintenance and repair monies.

The reliable tolling of the bell and the beautiful three clock faces are an integral part of Shrewsbury's life and hopefully their proper operation can be assured for many years.

Historical Discoveries from the Graveyard

The key change in the information about our history through the study of the graveyard related to the gravestones and was due to the comprehensive grant-funded assessment work performed by Lorraine Schnabel. Every stone was photographed from many angles and the condition of each marker was described. All of this information is incorporated into our graveyard database.

The grant also funded the restoration of fourteen of our oldest stones in the most critical condition from the perspective of damage by future storms. This work was performed by Jablonski Building Conservation led by Stephanie Hoagland-Bond under Lorraine Schnabel's guidance. Thirteen of the fourteen restored markers were made of brown sandstone which was common in New Jersey in the 17th and 18th centuries. These are the markers that were restored.

1. Marker 601 Joseph Tole 1762-1781
2. Marker 316 Sarah Throckmorton 1659-1743
3. Marker 428 Margaret Throckmorton 1765-1817
4. Marker 331 Hartness Throckmorton 1735-1760
5. Marker 490 Elizabeth Vaughton 1715-1800
6. Marker 491 Mary Wessells 1728-1816
7. Marker 494 Susannah De Haert 1724-1780
8. Marker 502 Mary Leonard 1716-1782
9. Marker 731 Zilpha Halstead 1723-1754
10. Marker 366 Hendrick Pool 1798-1818
11. Marker 392 Mary Slocum 1734-1809



Zilpha Halstead

12. Marker 717 John Hart 1759-1805
13. Marker 701 Clara Wheeler 1782-1855 (Marble)
14. Marker 866 Christina Hageman 1781-1784

During the restoration some interesting historical aspects were discerned. The Halstead marker which had been broken at the base revealed, upon excavation, some practice carving by the carver on the base. Rather than re-attach the marker to its base with a resultant unaesthetic appearance, we chose to lay the marker horizontally which then permitted the view of the practice markings.

Zilpha was the sister-in law of Daniel Halstead, the



Christina Hageman

lead carpenter for the present church construction in 1769.

We also restored the marker of Christina Hageman , a two year old, whose gravestone condition was an incomplete jigsaw puzzle collection of delaminated pieces. The inscription could thus no longer be read. Her marker was also separated from the base but the base could not be found. Once restored as well as possible, we relocated her marker much closer to the church, also horizontally installed.

The full inscription text is incomplete, but some research found the poem near the bottom to be.

*“Happy the babe who privileged thus by fate
To shorter labor and a lighter weight*

*Received but yesterday the gift of breath
Ordered tomorrow to return to death”*

One sidelight to these discoveries was the likelihood that more gravemarkers were moved to make room for the 1769 church. We know that was true of the three markers laid in the floor of the church. However, there were many more burials during the years between the erection of the earlier church c 1732 and the current church building in 1769. It seems logical that more stones were relocated. The base of Zilpha Halstead’s stone was found to be upside down, clearly indicating it having been moved. Yet, it was located within the Halstead plot. Perhaps the entire Halstead plot was relocated? More fodder for future research.



Lorraine Schnabel and Stephanie Hoagland-Bond

Internship

In 2015 an aerial video was taken of the church. This video was placed on the church web site with G F Handel’s Hallelujah chorus in the background. This year we engaged another student from Monmouth University to expand the videos describing the church from different perspectives again using the aerial videos as the background for the videos. However, for these videos, there would be more information as well as a focus on these different aspect of the life of the church. The four videos are:

- General Information
- History

- Our Spiritual Life
- The Graveyard

These four videos are almost complete but need a little more editing before being ready for broader distribution. The student who did this work is Amanda Kontor who was in the Communications Department at Monmouth. She was valedictorian at her graduation in May and is now studying for her Master’s Degree at the University of Vienna. She did a spectacular job on the videos with supervision by Professor Jennifer Shamrock at the University .

We are planning a fifth video about the Community Life of the Parish.

George Keith Sign

The sign along Broad Street that marks the History of Christ Church and the role of George Keith has been replaced through the efforts of the parish. The original sign was badly worn and only partially legible. This bright new sign now makes the history more clearly known to the many motorists passing by each day.



Did You Know...?

The "Did you Know ...? Column in the Crown, the monthly Parish Newsletter, continued through 2016. In addition to some topics covered elsewhere in this report, a comparison of the parish from the early 1940s to the present based on the Parochial Report was written as was one on Theodosius Bartow. Bartow was signer of the 1738 charter for the church and owner of one of the gravemarkers in the floor of the church. His name came into prominence most recently as the father of Aaron Burr's wife, Theodosia, about whom a song was written for the hit musical "Hamilton".

The current issue of the Crown and the past year's issues are available on the parish web site (christchurchshrewsbury.org)

We have a regular schedule of activities each year and did so again this year. These included the Weekend in Olde Monmouth in May in partnership with the County Historical Commission, the Lantern Tour in December, the Independence Day Service on the Sunday before that holiday, and the visit and tour for the Shrewsbury Borough 4th graders in June.

Regular Annual Historical Activities

Independence Day Service

At the Independence Day Service Robert Kelly portrayed Samuel Stelle Smith, Jeanne Sundberg was Dorothy Manson, and Patrice Thornton portrayed Graham Kearney Cooke.



Chorus of the Atlantic performing at the Independence Day Service



Jeanne Sundberg, Robert Kelly and Patrice Thornton

Weekend in Olde Monmouth

We participated in the County Weekend in Olde Monmouth program on the first weekend in May as we have every year that it has been conducted. As usual we put out a collection of our historical artifacts as follows...

1. 1684 LEEDS INDIAN DEED

2. OLD STEEPLE ORB WITH PHOTO OF ORB IN PLACE

3. MUSKET BALL IN WOOD

4. 100TH BUILDING ANNIVERSARY SERVICE PROGRAM

5. PARISH REGISTER – 18TH CENTURY

6. VESTRY MINUTES - 18TH CENTURY

7. 1706 DEED FOR CHURCH PROPERTY

8. 1824 GLEBE FIREWOOD AUCTION

9. BUILDER'S AGREEMENT

10. LOTTERY TICKETS



2016 WOM Visitors at Christ Church



Judi and Stuart Buncher Greet Visitors at WOM

The Lantern Tour

As always the Lantern Tour was a partnership with the Quakers, the Allen House and the Presbyterian Church. This year 150-160 tourists learned about the amazing history at the four corners.



Some Cast Members from the Lantern Tour

Memorial Weekend Service

We held our annual Graveyard ceremony recognizing the contributions of those buried in our churchyard who served their country in the armed forces in wars from the French and Indian to the Vietnam. There were no new interments of veterans in 2016. The choir performed several patriotic anthems and hymns.



Judi Buncher is Sister Veronica of the Sisters of the Holy Cross. The Sisters were the first Naval Nurses on the very first Navy Hospital Ship, the Red Rover. Stuart Buncher portrayed a Sergeant from the 2nd NJ Cavalry Company A, part of the 2nd NJ Brigade. The 2nd NJ Brigade consisted of the 1st NJ Artillery, the 2nd NJ Cavalry, the 7th NJ Infantry and the 22nd NJ Colored Troops.

The list of veterans interred in the Christ Church Graveyard can be found on the web site (christchurchshrewsbury.org).



Group Tours

As always, we host different groups at the church for tours of the historic building and its surrounding graveyard. Sometimes individuals request a tour but many are arranged for groups. Prominent this year were tours for three different cub scout troops: Shrewsbury, Fair Haven, and Oceanport. In addition, over 70 members of the Monmouth County Genealogical Society.



Judi Buncher portrays Louise Jost for the Monmouth County Genealogical Society

Monmouth University Tour

In addition, on October 12th, Dr. Richard Veit of Monmouth University brought his Historical



Rich Veit discusses the Victorian era gravemarkers

Archaeology Class to the church for a tour of the church and the graveyard.



MCGS Members meeting at Christ Church

Cub Scout Tours



Oceanport Cub Scouts



Magdalena Aders as Florence Hazard for the Shrewsbury Cub Scouts

Historical Vignettes

Looking ahead to 2017, we are working on a project called Historical Vignettes. The intent of the project is to create brief multimedia descriptions of aspects of our history. A given vignette might include video, text, audio, photos and a voice over narration. Robert Maber, Kristen Kormann and Robert Kelly will be members of this project. Examples of these vignettes are the Stained Glass (1867 or before), Reverend Samuel Cooke (1751-1775), The Bell (1788), the Clock Tower (1874), the Organ (1875), the glebe (1739-1906), the triptychs (1942/1973), the Vinegar Bible (1716), The Lotteries (1758, 1760), William Leeds (18th c), Lewis Morris

(18th c), the Parish Houses (1899-present), our histories (1875/1902), the parish and church building anniversary celebrations (1869-2002), the WWII triptychs, the deeds (1686-1950), the Rectory (1824), the clergy (1702-present), the priest/missionary letters (1733-1775), the parish register (1733-present), the Queen Anne Communion Service (1708), 17th and 18th century books, graveyard stones, and graveyard prominent individuals

These will be on the parish web site and in other venues to communicate the rich history of the church to the broader community.

General Information: If you would like to receive an electronic copy of our monthly Parish Newsletter, the Crown, please also contact the parish historian. Feel free to share this History Newsletter with others who may be interested.

The History Newsletter is on the parish web site (christchurchshrewsbury.org)

If you wish to be removed from the distribution list of this newsletter please reply to this e-mail requesting that.