



Bulletin of the Passaic County Historical Society

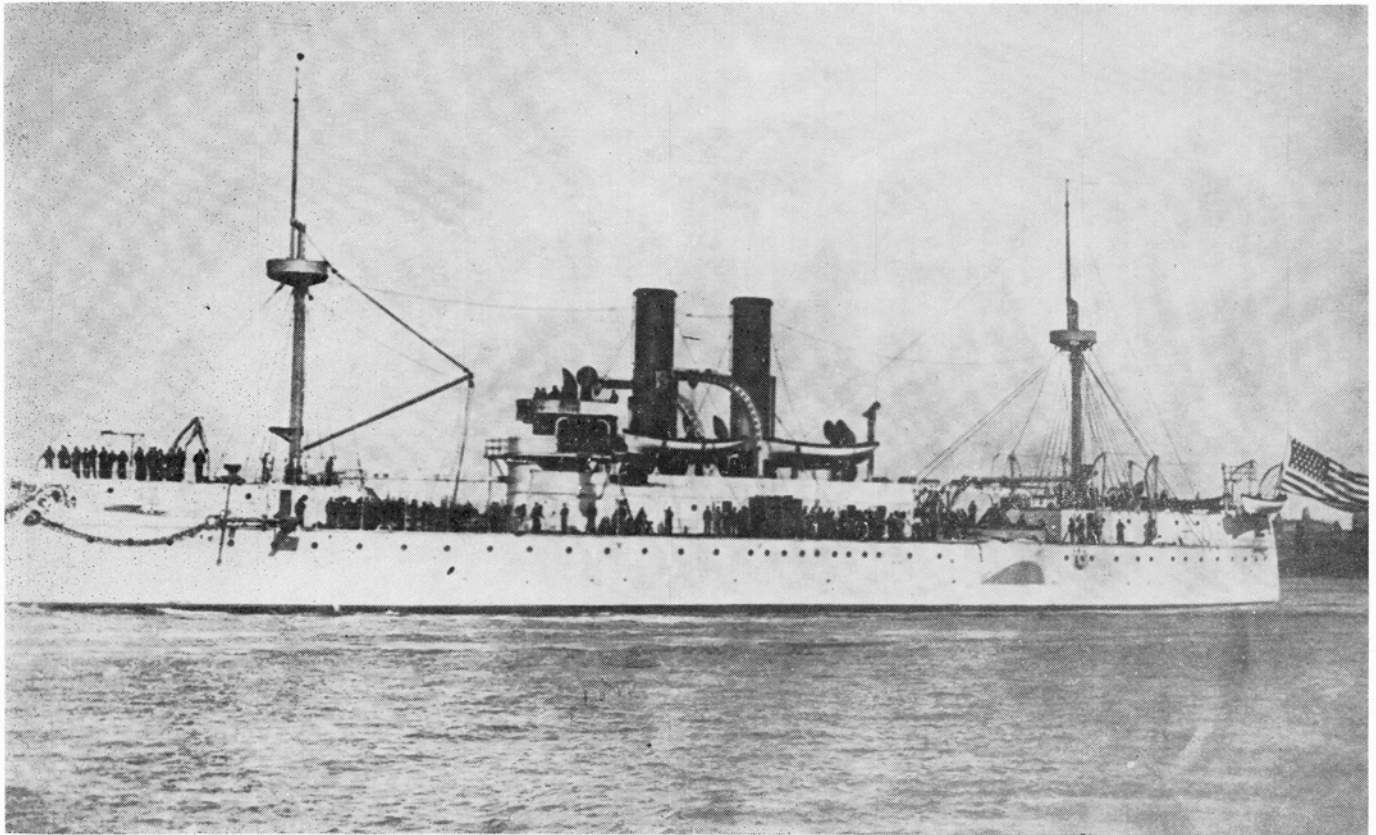
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Robert P. Brooks, Editor

ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR WITH SPAIN



U. S. S. MAINE

A WAR IN WHICH PATERSONIANS PLAY VERY IMPORTANT ROLES

The year 1958 is the sixtieth anniversary of the beginning of the war with Spain. This event in itself would be sufficient cause for a renewed study of this very critical period in the history of the United States; but when we consider that several Patersonians played a highly important part in this crisis, we pause to consider a few of the interesting historical scenes in this period in our Nation's history.

Cuba had been the proud possession of

Spain since its discovery by Columbus four hundred years before. Throughout Cuba's colonial history, misgovernment was the rule in addition to exploitation and oppression. These led to frequent insurrections and the great outbreak, known as the Ten Years' War of 1868-1878, followed. In 1895 the Cubans again revolted. During the war which followed, the cruelties inflicted by the Spanish upon Cubans led to frequent protests by the United States government.

The American populace became very angry with Spain because of the methods used by the Spanish commander in Cuba, General Valerian

Weyler; and in the presidential nominating conventions of both leading political parties in 1896, platforms were adopted which condemned the Spanish misrule of Cuba. Also, both houses of the Congress passed resolutions in favor of Cuban independence. President Grover Cleveland, in his final message to the Congress in December 1896, devoted six pages to the Cuban situation. As the retiring President Cleveland and President William Mc Kinley were driving back from the Capitol after President McKinley's inauguration on March 4, 1897, Mr. Cleveland remarked to President Mc Kinley: "I am deeply sorry, Mr. President, to pass on to you a war with Spain. It will come within two years. Nothing can stop it."

President McKinley strove by diplomatic means to persuade Spain to grant Cuba some degree of independence but these attempts were only met by rebuke. Meanwhile, throughout the United States, sermons were preached against Spanish rule, many newspapers demanded that the government interfere at once and thereby aid the Cuban people in their "heroic struggle for liberty."

The government of the United States was busily engaged in the exchange of letters with the Spanish government in a serious attempt to get the Cuban matter arbitrated so that peace might be restored on the island. In addition to his diplomatic endeavors, President Mc Kinley, early in the spring of 1898, ordered the battleship MAINE to Havana harbor to protect the many Americans who were living in Cuba. Many Americans had large investments there especially in the sugar industry and the railroads.

On February 15, the MAINE, while lying quietly at anchor, exploded from some unknown source beneath her and quickly sank to the bottom of Havana harbor taking with her two officers and 264 members of her crew. This tragedy stirred all America from coast to coast. The slogan, "*Remember the Maine*" appeared everywhere on buttons, posters, newspapers and on the lips of people throughout our country. With the MAINE disaster uppermost very vigorous demands were made upon the government to declare war with Spain.

Preliminary investigations of the cause for the MAINE disaster disclosed that it was the result of a mine although subsequent studies could never prove that the mine was actually "triggered" by the Spanish. But this did not quiet

the clamor for war. The President delayed war action as long as he was able to do so for he never wanted a war and decided that there would be no war at least until every American had left the island as well as Spain. Spain's Queen Regent finally yielded to the entreaties of the Pope in early April 1898 and promised to grant the Cubans many concessions. However, this decision was made too late.

Meanwhile, throughout the United States the people were making strong demands upon the President for more definite action. Mrs. Garret A. Hobart, wife of the Vice President, writing in her "*Memories*" of this critical period said, "Mr. Hobart was worried to desperation by the wave of rebellious criticism against his beloved friend, the Chief Executive. From every quarter came protests of his inactivity." Both in the Senate and in the House there was a strong, persistent demand for a war of intervention; and on March 8, 1898 the Congress unanimously voted an appropriation of fifty million dollars as an emergency fund for the National defense.

As the President of the Senate, Mr. Hobart had his hands full in restraining that body as "they had their sleeves rolled up for battle," says Mrs. Hobart. In one session the Senate all but declared war over the President's head but by a parliamentary maneuver Mr. Hobart managed to quiet things temporarily.

The Vice President invited the President for a drive during the period of these heated debates in the Senate and Mrs. Hobart relates this incident. During the ride, the Vice President presented the facts to President Mc Kinley.

Said Mr. Hobart, "Mr. President, as the leader in the Senate, I can hold back action on the Cuban situation no longer. If you do not take action immediately, the Senate will declare war on its own motion."

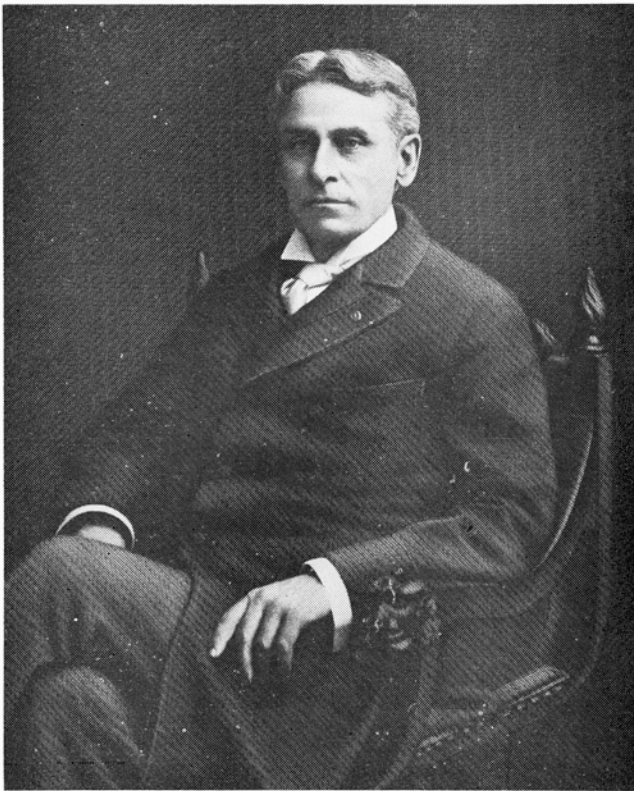
Turning to Mr. Hobart with a startled look, President Mc Kinley asked, "Do you really mean that the Senate would declare war on its own motion?"

"I do," was Mr. Hobart's reply, "I can restrain them no longer."

The remainder of the drive was made in grave silence. Having had frequent discussions with his cabinet, the President decided upon a procedure, but he kept his own counsel. Some time past he had determined that there should

be no war while American citizens remained in Cuba or Spain and when he was informed that all had been removed, he released to the Congress the famous document which had been safely tucked away.

This document was prepared by the Attorney General from a draft of ideas which the Attorney General had been asked to prepare and submit to the President some time in the early Spring of 1898. The Attorney General of the United States was the Honorable John W. Griggs,¹ Patersonian and a former Governor of New Jersey.



Courtesy of John L. Griggs

JOHN W. GRIGGS

Attorney General Griggs submitted a rough draft of points to be made in the President's MESSAGE to the Congress. This draft was contained on two pages.

¹—John W. Griggs was born in Newton, Sussex County, New Jersey on July 10, 1849 the son of a farmer. He came to Paterson in 1871 to continue in his law studies which he began in Newton. He studied with Socrates Tuttle, then famous as a lawyer of Paterson, was licensed as an attorney in 1871 and practiced law in the firm of Tuttle and Griggs.

Mr. Griggs was elected to the Assembly of N. J. in 1875 and re-elected in 1877. He was elected State Senator in 1882, re-elected in 1884 and was chosen by his colleagues in 1886 to be their presiding officer. He was elected Governor of New Jersey in 1896 and served until 1898 when President William McKinley appointed him Attorney General of the United States.

The President, being well pleased with the ideas, directed Mr. Griggs to prepare a message to be delivered to the Congress at the President's discretion. The Attorney General immediately began work on it and when finished it was acceptable to the President and his advisors for it was "firm and forceful with logic and acute exactness."

The President made no corrections or eliminations but he did add a short paragraph which he wrote in long hand which states:

"I recommend that notice be given to the Spanish Government that unless war on the Island of Cuba be stopped and peace and harmony be restored in days, the United States Govt. will intervene to stop it."

This valuable State Paper is a valued possession of THE PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY as is likewise the two-page draft of ideas submitted to the President by the Attorney General. Both of these documents are on exhibition in the McKinley-Hobart & Spanish American War Room of the Museum.

As was previously stated, this prepared message had been in safe keeping for some weeks. It was on April 11, 1898 that the President delivered it to the Congress. Eight days later, with only forty dissenting votes, the Congress passed resolutions which recognized the independence of Cuba; demanded the immediate withdrawal of Spain from the island; and authorized the President to employ military and naval forces to carry out the resolution. Vice President Hobart signed the "War Message" at 12:26 P.M. and the pen was sent to Mrs. Hobart under date of April 20, 1898.²

Our navy, thanks largely to Theodore Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, was in excellent condition. At that time, our Asiatic fleet consisted of seven vessels under the command of Commodore (later Admiral) George Dewey. Dewey's Chief Engineer of the fleet was James Entwistle (later Rear-Admiral) of Pater-

²—The following letter sent to Mrs. Hobart is of local interest. This letter and the pen are owned by the Society.

C o p y

The Vice-President's Chamber
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mrs. Hobart:

It occurred to me the other day while Mr. Hobart was signing the "War Bill" that perhaps, as a relic of that interesting occasion, you might care to have the pen which he used then, either for yourself or for some friend. I told Mr. Hobart then that I would like to get the pen for you and here it is.

Very sincerely,
(Signed) Frederick Evans.

April 20, 1898

son, N. J.³ This fleet was in Hong Kong when war broke out. On April 25, 1898 he received the following cable from the Navy Department:

"Dewey, Hong Kong. War commenced between United States and Spain. Proceed at once to the Philippine Islands. Commence operations at once, particularly against the Spanish fleet. You must capture vessels or destroy."

The wife of the Vice President is the authority for stating that, Attorney General Griggs who had an engagement to spend Sunday afternoon, April 24, at the home of Vice President



REAR ADMIRAL JAMES ENTWISTLE

and Mrs. Hobart, had been suddenly called to the White House on very important business. "I have always understood," says Mrs. Hobart in her *Memories*, "that Mr. Griggs at the President's suggestion on that afternoon wrote the famous cable which resulted in Dewey's victory of Manila Bay; and in the absence of Secretary Long of the Navy, who was away from

Washington on that day, Mr. Griggs signed the Secretary's name."

As the result of these orders, Commodore Dewey sailed into Manila harbor with his fleet at dawn on May 1, 1898. By noon every one of the Spanish ships was sunk or in flames, the land batteries were silenced. Dewey's ships were only slightly damaged and only seven of his men were wounded.

Meanwhile about 16,000 American troops had been dispatched to Cuba under Major General W. R. Shafter, this included the picturesque "Rough Riders" under Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. But as President Mc Kinley had realized very acutely, the United States were not at all prepared for a war. The Government did not have at hand raw materials to provide sufficient and proper food, shelter or equipment. The army's food was so bad that many protests were made to the government; disease had taken the toll of more men than the bullets of the Spanish as the Americans were unused to the tropics. The Spaniards were strongly intrenched on the eastern end of the island at Santiago; and to make matters worse there, Admiral Cervera's Spanish fleet was in the harbor below the Americans who were in the hills of El Caney and San Juan. Then came July 3. We will allow Mrs. Hobart to relate an interesting story which took place in Washington. She says,

"I remember that day well . . . A carriage drove up to the door. General Alger, our Secretary of War, and General Corbin, his adjutant general alighted. They asked at the door for the Vice President. When told that he and Senator Mark Hanna were out driving together, they started to leave.

(Concluded on Page 84)

³—Rear Admiral James Entwistle was born in Paterson on July 8, 1837. He was the son of Thomas E. and Fanny Holt Entwistle. He attended the public schools in Paterson and later in New York City. During the Civil War he served the United States Navy on many assignments one being on the blockade of Mobile.

In 1881 he was transferred to the Far East with China as his station. Here he was chief engineering officer on the "Ashuelot" and on other very interesting assignments until March 24, 1897 when he was ordered to report to Commodore George Dewey on the flagship "Olympia." Dewey assigned Engineer Entwistle to the office as Chief Engineer of his fleet.

Engineer Entwistle was honored with a Dewey Medal for his services in the battle and in 1901 was advanced two numbers "for eminent and conspicuous conduct in battle."

He had already been retired, but in 1899, because of his participation in the Civil War, he was advanced one rank. When he returned to his native Paterson, he came with title, rank and pay as Read Admiral James Entwistle.

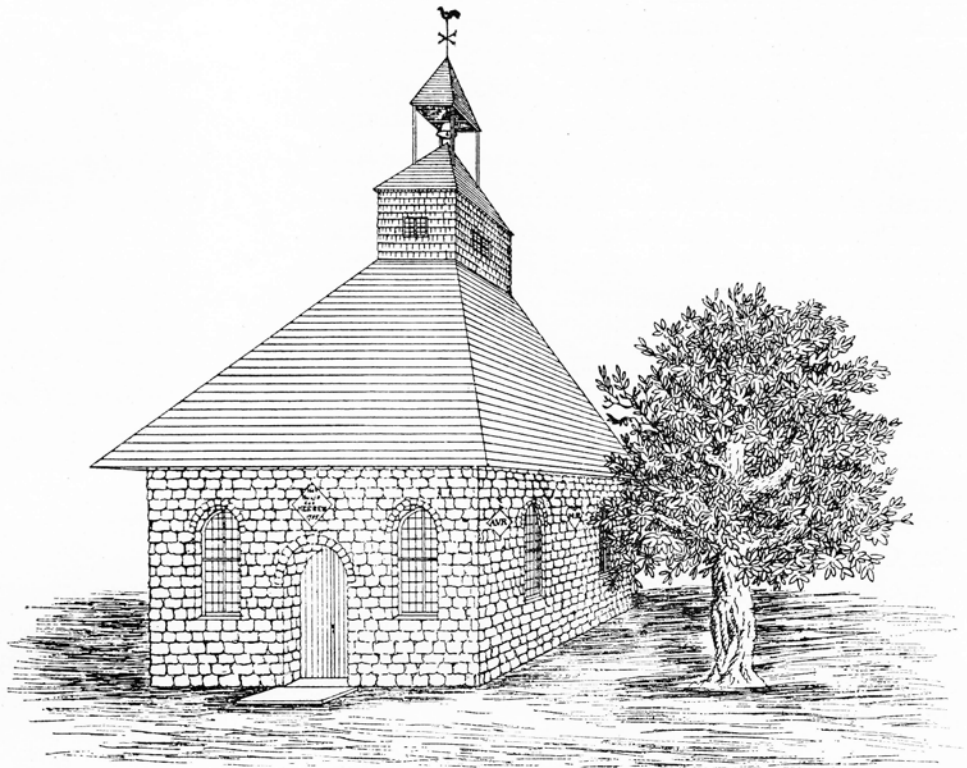
Admiral Entwistle never married. He passed away at his home 320 Broadway, Paterson on March 23, 1910. The Paterson Eye and Ear Infirmary and the Memorial Day Nursery, both of Paterson received bequests from Paterson's hero.

The Dutch Church of Totowa, 1755-1827

During Revolutionary War days, a little settlement lay about the Great Falls. On both sides and near the Passaic River were the farms of the Dutch pioneers bearing names Post, Van Houte (Van Houten), Ryerson, Godwin, Van Winkle, Van Gieson—so common those days in that vicinity.

Roads were few. They were little more than trails. The "York Road," following the river connected the villages of Acquackanonk Landing and the Wesel with the Falls' area. From the northward came another road connecting the mines at Ringwood, Pompton, and Preakness with Totowa, (as the Falls' area was then known). This Old Totowa Road passed between the houses of two Van Houtens which were then standing in what is now the ball field beyond Westside Park, passed the little house (1762) of Cornelius Neafie at the top of the steep hill and then continued down the hill on what is known as Ryle Avenue, Paterson today. At the foot of the hill, it met a road leading to the Goffle. From here it ran directly to the river just a few feet from what later became West street. Here was old Totowa Bridge, the center of things and the junction of the two principal roads of the county.

On the hillside along the old Totowa Road and clearly within the sound of the rushing waters tumbling over the Great Falls, the settlers from the area and from some of the more distant places constituted a church in 1755. Dutch congregations had already been established in Acquackanonk and Pompton. But, being "bereaved of a pastor in 1750" and having heard "with much joy" of the ability in preaching and being satisfied about the pious conduct of one young student of Divinity from a seminary in Pennsylvania by the name of David Marinus, both of those churches issued a call



OLD DUTCH CHURCH OF TOTOWA

to Mr. Marinus on November 12, 1750 to become their pastor. In the call it was stated that "your Reverend is to preach in the Summer season of six months twice each Sabbath. In the forenoon you will explain a free text and in the afternoon you will preach from the Heidelberg catechism."

Mr. Marinus accepted the call. During the early years of his ministry in Acquackanonk and in Pompton, he was very successful. He appeared to be a man of considerable ability.

In those days, it was the custom for the ministers to preach occasionally during the week in hamlets remote from the churches. It can very well be presumed that Dominie Marinus preached to the settlers at The Falls prior to 1755. Finding his farm of six acres in Acquackanonk too small, he purchased 100 acres of land at Totowa on July 20, 1754 from Henry Brockholst, a large land holder. This tract which was about 550 feet wide extended from the river at a point between the island and the falls, on a north-west line.

The young Dominie set up a "preaching station" in the area which re-kindled the re-

ligious interest in the people so that they applied on November 12, 1755 to the Consistory for permission to organize the Dutch Church of Totowa. A satisfactory agreement was arranged with the other two churches and the Totowa church was allotted a fourth part of Mr. Marinus's services and it was to pay one-fourth part of his salary.

Within a short time, a Consistory was formed and a Church was constituted at Totowa. This Consistory was made up as follows: Simeon Van Winkle, Elder, the son of Patentee Simon Jacobse (Van Winkle). Simeon Van Winkle was a tanner who lived at the little white house along the river at the ford. (This spot was at the foot of Park Avenue in later days) Jacob van Houte, grandfather of Judge Garrebrant Van Houten; Johannes Reyerse (Ryerson) who probably lived at the Goffle; Jacobus Post, the builder of later known as "Zabriskie's Mills" at Arcola; Dierck Van Gieson, Deacon and a leading figure in the new church who lived, on what was later known as Totowa Avenue, near Ryerson; Helmich Van Houten, who lived near the Lincoln Bridge of later days on Totowa Avenue; Johannis van Houte and Franz Post.

Shortly after the Consistory was formed, work was begun on a church building. This was erected on land belonging to Henry Brockholst but afterward given to the church. It lay on the hillside along old Totowa Road (now Ryle Avenue, and in the angle between Ryle Avenue and Hamburg Avenue of much later date).

The north line of the property ran parallel to what later became Matlock Street about 100 feet south; while the south line ran along the line of "Quarry Road" northeast from Ryle Avenue; and the easterly line was from 15 to 20 feet from a brook or from 75 to 100 feet west of the present Hamburg Avenue line. The larger part of the almost triangular plot lay along Ryle Avenue. It was not, however, until April 14, 1762 that Brockholst actually deeded the property to the Church. This deed relates in part:

"To all Christian People these presents shall come Henry Brockhurst, Esq. sendeth greeting. Know ye that I, Henry Brockhurst son of heir-at-law of Anthony Brockhurst deceased of the County of Bergen in the Province of New Jersey out of the good will I owe and the regard I have for the promotion of the Christian Religion and especially the manner of worship of the low Dutch Reformed Church of Holland according as the same is Established by the National Synod of Dordrecht, etc. . . . and by these presents do give grant bargain sell alien convey and confirm unto Cornelius

Kip, Robert Van Houten, Cornelius Westervelt, Johannis Van Blarcom and Cornelius Gerietse, Trustees of the Low Dutch Reformed Church of Totowa, a certain lot of land situate lying and being in the County of Bergen in the Eastern Division of the Province of New Jersey near the bridge erected over the Passaic River at Totowa where said church is now being built . . . (etc.). (The property conveyed containing one acre.)

Beside a buttonwood tree a quaint church building was erected of brown stone. It was about 30 by 40 feet in size with the walls about 18 feet high. A steeply pitched four-sided cedar roof covered the structure and overhung the walls from two to three feet; where it met in the center at a point, the roof was surmounted by a belfry. This was simply constructed of four posts which "straggled" the pyramidal apex over which a roof was placed. The bell with its wheel was left in the open. On the top was the traditional weathercock.

The front door, on Totowa Road, was in the middle and on either side of it were two windows. Both the door and all of the windows were set in arches made in the stone work. Over the door, was a square stone, set up in the masonry on one of its points and bearing an inscription of which more will be related later in the story. There was a spacious brown stone door step. On each side of the church were two windows while the rear had no opening.

Upon entering, one observed that there was neither a vestibule or anti-room but on either side of the entrance there was a narrow stairway leading to the galleries. The galleries were not wide. They were provided with long benches and they were protected in front by open lattice work of half rounded rails like stair banisters.

Two rows of boxed pews having straight, high sides and doors ran the length of the floor, while along each of the side walls were high-backed benches for the boys and the youths.

In front of the long bench running the entire length of the church, sat the slaves and the "free persons of color." Under a "sounding board roof" attached to the rear wall, was the high pulpit. To the right of the pulpit, sat the Elders while the Deacons sat on the left. A few feet forward of the High Pulpit was the "Voorleser's Box." He was the "Fore-reader" and psalm singer.

The ceiling sloped upward like the roof of the Church and was ceiled with boards. The entire interior was painted a dingy drab.

Foot stoves provided the only warmth for the worshippers. The "collection boxes" consisted of small, black cloth bags attached to long poles to reach all the way through the pews. On the bottom of the bags were two little bells. The collection was used to pay the salary of the Minister and was taken at the conclusion of the sermon which usually lasted for more than one hour.

Here from 1755 until about the year 1762, the Reverend David Marinus served as minister and pastor. After Dominie Marinus left about 1762, the church was supplied by the pastor of the Fairfield Reformed Church for about five years; then until 1772, it appears that there was no one to minister to the congregation. But in November 1772, the Rev. Dr. Hermanus Meyer came and remained the pastor until his death in 1791. The Totowa Church now severed its connections with the Pompton Church but remained in close relations with the Church at Acquackanonk and shared in the pastorate of the Rev. Henricus Schoonmaker who gave one-third of his time to Totowa. He preached at Totowa from 1791 until his retirement in 1816 and for a time lived in Paterson. After March 1816, services were held every other Sunday and they were conducted by the Rev. William Eltinge, the Pastor at Paramus from 1816 until 1827 when on March 26 a fire on the roof completely consumed the building.

It is thought that the fire started on the dry cedar roof as the result of a gunner shooting a bird which had alighted on the roof. Before the volunteer firemen could arrive at the scene, nothing but the stone walls were left. There were only two hand engines in Paterson at that time and due to a high wind, in less than one-half hour all of the woodwork of the church was completely burned. The brown stone walls stood for about a year when they were taken down and used in the building of the Reformed Church commonly known as "The Town Clock Building." This church was erected on the east side of Main Street between Ellison and Van Houten. It was dedicated on March 15, 1829; but like its predecessor, it too was destroyed by fire on December 14, 1871. In the meantime, the Second Reformed Church asked for a charter which was granted; and on Sunday, June 8, 1828 this church was opened for worship on the corner of Temple and Water Streets.

Burial Grounds of Old Totowa Church

The first interments were made near the church building; but, within forty years, the church yard to the east and south were filled. Unfortunately only a few markers identified the final resting place of many of the first settlers of Passaic County. If a marker was used it was usually a smooth field stone or slab of sandstone whose life-span was short.

One finds it easy to contemplate as did Thomas Grey (1716-1771).

*"Perhaps in the neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial
fire;
Hands that the rod of empire might have
swayed,
Or walked to ecstasy the living lyre."*

*"Far from the maddening crowd's ignoble
strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to
stray;
Along the cool, sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their
way."*

From about 1790 until 1845, interments for the Dutch Reformed churches were made in a cemetery lot lying to the southwest of old Totowa Road, west of the Island Market. This property later passed into the hands of the Geering dye works. In this graveyard many of the families of Paterson's young days were interred. General Godwin was one of the last to be laid to rest there.

Subsequently many families had the remains of their loved ones removed and placed elsewhere; and in 1888, what remains were left, were removed to the cemetery of the First Reformed Church on Willis Street (the Park Avenue site of the Eastside High School.)

Earlier in this story mention was made of the brownstone which had been placed in the front wall, over the door, of the Old Dutch Church on Totowa Road. For many years after the destruction of the old church, many versions persisted as to its inscription. Mr. William Gledhill, being interested in local history and in exactness searched for the stone for many years after the fire and in 1865 he located it and copied the inscription. The following is a copy of his diary made Aug. 19, 1865 which is in possession of the Society:

"In my last talk with Mr. (Robert) King he said the old Dutch Church in Manchester had in its front a stone, diamond shaped, with the inscription, 'Het Huys Des Heeren' and date, and that he had heard it was now somewhere in the Main St. Dutch Church.

"I have this day seen it in the tower of that Church on the floor next above the clock works, just over the hole made for the new organ; the old well hole is there yet, unenclosed, and n. of it stands the stone on a point. It is about thus:

HET
 HUYS DES
 HEEREN 1755
 D. MARINUS
 V.D.M.

Aug. 25, 1865

"Seeing a quotation of this inscription on the church stone some days ago different from my memorandum and memory, I this morning, again visited the tower of the Main Street Church & find that the stone is 18 inches square but has been inserted in the wall point up, so as to present the appearance of a diamond. It is about 2½ inches thick, of red sand stone. The letters are all caps, and below is a facsimile, dots or periods included

HET
 HUYS: DET
 HEEREN 1755
 D. MARINUS
 V: D. M.

The old stone succumber in the fire of 1871 but its history and record are preserved—thanks to THE PASSAIC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY which is preserving many valued records of yesteryear, pictures and countless objects. All tell interesting stories of the past and the present.

Ed.

The Bull Mill located on Mill Street, near foot of Passaic Street about 1793 was the second oldest mill in the United States for the spinning of cotton.

Dr. William H. Pruden, the oldest member of our Society and one of the charter members, passed away in 1956 at age 95 years. Dr. Pruden was the oldest practicing dentist in America. It was he who made the first gold dental crown in New Jersey

ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR WITH SPAIN

(Continued from Page 80)

"I called from my open window, where I was sitting when they approached the house, 'I'm sorry you don't want to see me!'

"'I'll come in if you'll let me swear,' replied General Alger.

"When I opened the door to them they showed me, in great agitation, a message just received from Santiago: *the Spanish fleet had escaped from the harbor!*

"General Alger was frantic. Would I please tell the Vice President to join them immediately at the White House for a conference with President Mc Kinley . . . These men were still in conference at the White House, when just before midnight another message came. It read: 'All Spanish fleet except one warship destroyed and burned!' . . . At two o'clock in the morning, as General Alger walked home from the White House, he had in his pocket another message just received from General Shafter at American Headquarters near Santiago, containing a single sentence. *'I shall hold my present position.'*"

In a short period of time, the enemy had been beaten on land and sea and hostilities were suspended on August 12, 1898 and a peace was soon executed.

Throughout this crisis, Vice President and Mrs. Hobart, Attorney General Griggs and Rear Admiral Entwistle played no small parts. One visiting Lambert Castle may see a vast collection of memorabilia pertaining to the Spanish-American War—the period when William Mc Kinley was President of the United States of America.

Two Early Skating Rinks

From an advertisement in *The Guardian*

"Skating at Island, opened Oct. 24, 1883
 Exhibition by T. A. Powell
 2:30-5:00 7:30-10:00"
 Note:—This rink closed on July 10, 1884.

The Derrom Hall Rink

A rink was opened in Derrom's Hall¹ about 1884. On September 6, 1884, with the temperature at 90° degrees F. the Grand Opening of the Union Skating Rink took place at the Wigwam, the proprietors being Garrabrant & Van Voorhis.

¹Derrom's Hall became the Bijou theatre afterwards.