

History and Incidents of Old St. Lukes

Crombie Allen wrote in a newspaper article dated 1898

"I went through the quaint old stone church Sunday with Dr. Joseph McKee. The key turned grimly in the rusty lock of the small vestibule. The interior of the Episcopal house of worship is quaint and queer. Dust, apparently of the last century, lurks in the comers. There is a pipe organ that dispensed sweet strains in the early part of this century. On the other side of the church is a small portable organ, which the United Presbyterians use. The windows are time-stained and finger scarred, while there is a general old-time air about the place. The church had been the oldest and among the most influential in the diocese. Gradually, the membership dwindled as the parishioners moved away to larger settlements..."

"Grandma Lea told me Sunday many interesting stories of the old church and its parishioners. Among other things she said was that Jane Lea Nixon's mother was the greatest friend the Indians had in the early days. Every night the settlers went to a settler's fort in the neighborhood for protection. Jane Lea's mother would leave in their unlocked house a chum of buttermilk and a piece of pone. The Indians would enter the house and eat the food. By signs they told the Leas that they would never be disturbed

"The majority of the old graves in the churchyard of St. Luke's were dug in the old-fashioned way. The grave kept the rectangular form until the bottom was reached, when a niche into which the coffin fit exactly would be carved out. There were no rough boxes in those days. One of the old-timers introduced an innovation by having slab stones instead of planks placed over his coffin. They had been used in the sidewalk in front of his home while he lived

From the Pittsburgh Leader, September 24, 1905:

"The Lea family was one of the pioneers in this end of the country. Major Lea, the first of the American line, crossed the Allegheny hills with Gen. Forbes, commander of the expedition against Ft. Duquesne in 1758. He was a major in that famous little army that, commanded in part by the illustrious warriors Washington and Boquet, planted the cross of St. George at the headwaters of the Ohio.

At present the two most conspicuous facts known about him are his connection with Forbes' expedition and his liberality in donating a site for St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church, Woodville. This is the oldest church of this denomination west of the Allegheny Mountains, services being held on the spot as early as 1765 when Pittsburg(h) was a mere collection of paltry huts protected by the guns of old Ft. Pitt. Worship was inaugurated only one year after the laying out of the first plan of lots in this little town at the Point, and the building of the Boquet redoubt, still standing, named the "Block House

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