

## **Reverend James Anderson (1678-1740)**

Pastor of Derry 1729-1732

Reverend James Anderson was born in Scotland on November 17, 1678. Educated in Edinburgh, he was ordained by the Presbytery of Irvine (Scotland) in 1707. Seeking call in the American colonies, he sailed for Virginia on March 6, 1709, arriving in Rappahannock on April 22, 1710. The Church of England was strongly established in that colony and Anderson found it difficult to establish a Presbyterian church. He traveled north to Pennsylvania and was received by the Philadelphia Presbytery in September 1711.

He next settled in New Castle, Delaware, where he was installed as pastor to the New Castle Presbyterian Church in 1713. In 1714, Anderson was also directed to serve as a monthly supply pastor to churches in Sussex (Cedar Creek) and Kent Counties, Delaware.

In 1717 he left Delaware to accept a call to a newly established church, the future First Presbyterian Church in New York City. Installed during the autumn of 1717, Anderson struggled to expand this new congregation. By 1719 the congregation had built a building but was now in great debt. This new church also had difficulty securing a charter due to the opposition of the Episcopal Church. Eventually Anderson lost the support of several members who objected to his inflexible Scottish background, his strict interpretation of Presbyterianism, and his severe preaching. Being unhappy and uncomfortable with the situation, he requested removal from the congregation. In September 1726 he was called to Donegal Presbyterian Church, near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and was installed in August 1727.

In September 1729, the newly established New Castle Presbytery received a request from settlers near the Swatara to be served by a supply minister. The Presbytery directed Reverend Anderson to serve this young congregation every fifth Sabbath. He became the first "settled" pastor over Derry Church until the call to Reverend William Bertram in 1732.

Reverend Anderson was a well-educated, talented and pious man, and was said to be a graceful and popular preacher. He was also one of the founding members of the New Castle Presbytery (Delaware) in 1717 and a charter member of the Donegal Presbytery (Lancaster, Pennsylvania) organized October 11, 1732. He was elected to serve as Moderator of the Synod of Philadelphia, May 23, 1739. He was held in high esteem by his peers and his name is associated with the early history of the Presbyterian Church in America (1709-1740).

Anderson married Suit Garland in 1713 with whom he had 11 children. She died in 1736, probably of smallpox, and was buried in the Donegal churchyard. He married his second wife, Rebecca Crawford of Donegal, in 1737.

Reverend Anderson died July 16, 1740 in Donegal, Lancaster County, his home since 1727. He is buried in the Donegal churchyard beside his first wife.

In his will only his children James, Susannah, and Thomas are identified as heirs, but the will references "all his children," many of whom died early. Reverend Anderson's estate was quite large. It included 305 acres, covering most of the present-day town of Marietta, Lancaster

County, and three slaves. His estate also included a "ferry right" from the east to the west bank of the Susquehanna River, called Anderson ferry.

Anderson's second wife, Rebecca, then married Joshua Baker. Baker's daughter, Mary Baker, became the wife of Reverend John Elder, another minister in the history of Derry Church.