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RICHARD BASSETT -- CONSTITUTION FRAMER AND HOLINESS ADVOCATE
Compiled and Edited By Duane V. Maxey

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Part 1
INTRODUCTION

Richard Bassett was well known as a distinguished person, not only in the state of Delaware, but in the United States. At different times he filled high and honorable stations. He was a lawyer of note, a legislator, judge, and a governor of Delaware. He was also a member of the convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, a senator in the first Congress, and

a judge of the United States Court for the circuit comprising the Districts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

In spite of his respected and influential positions, and their wealth, Richard Bassett and his wife became humbled followers of Christ -- Methodist Christians, and zealous advocates of scriptural holiness. Their wealth did not exempt them from the requirements of the Methodist discipline. In reference to some of the wealthy and influential families in Methodism, including the Bassetts, one wrote: "These wealthy families conformed to Methodist rule and discipline as strictly as the poor ..." With the lowly, "they wealthy mingled in worship."

On Bohemian manor, where Richard Bassett owned 6,000 acres, old-time Methodist campmeetings were conducted. In 1802, Richard Bassett wrote:

"Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. I conceive I am within bounds when I say the congregations this day, had they been numbered, were seven thousand souls. I say congregations, for such was the multitude, it was found necessary to have three preachers engaged at the same time, the congregations at a proper distance from each other; and this was not enough, a fourth congregation might have been found.

"Surely the scene was awful; a time to be remembered, and a day of great solemnity. The power of God was great among saints and sinners. We had also a glorious day and night both in the house of God, and my own house; several were powerfully awakened, at private houses, in times of singing and prayer. On Monday sinners began to be greatly alarmed and powerfully agitated in mind. On Tuesday, after preaching, the sacrament was administered. This was the most gracious, solemn, and rejoicing time I ever saw. I conclude there were not less than between twelve and fifteen hundred who came to the Lord's table, white and colored people. In this exercise many sinners were cut to the heart, and powerful convictions took place, most of which I believe ended in sound conversions, and many backsliders were reclaimed.

"O the astonishing goodness of the all-wonder-working God! I presume there were not less than from twenty to thirty souls converted or sanctified in my own house during the meeting. Blessed be God for it. I know you will say in your heart, Amen. The two last days our meeting was the best, and so it was at the last yearly meeting. Our blessed God, in both stances, kept the best wine to the last. We continued till three o'clock on Friday morning. It gave me some grief that we did not hold out longer, because I saw such an uncommon thirst in the hearts of the people of God. There must have been some hundreds awakened."

Regarding Mrs. Bassett, Freeborn Garrettson wrote: "Sister Bassett ... is one of the happiest women I have met with a living witness of sanctification, whose soul seems to be continually wrapped in a flame of love."

Stevens wrote: "Richard Bassett, of Dover, Delaware, was, as we have seen, a man of pre-eminence in the civil and social life of these times ... He 'lived a bright example of holiness, and left the world praising God.' He often preached, and was the chief founder of "Wesley Chapel," in Dover. They had three residences, one in Dover, one in Wilmington, and another at Bohemia Manor, a famous locality in the early Methodist annals, where Ann Bassett delighted to

minister to the way-worn itinerants. All of them were favorite homes of the ministry, and scenes of early Quarterly Conferences and other extraordinary meetings."

To learn more about these wealthy, and yet humble holiness advocates, you are invited to read and study all that follows in this file. Here is a compilation that consists of excerpts about the Bassetts obtained from several digital publications in the HDM Library. No attempt has been made to amalgamate the excerpts into one, chronological sketch. However, I have grouped the excerpts according to the author and publication from which they were taken.

Perhaps the best, uninterrupted account of Richard Bassett is that given by John Lednum. Thus, I have placed it first in the compilation. The concise sketch by Matthew Simpson I have placed second. The excerpts from Abel Stevens follow, and last are those from Ezra S. Tipple.

I hope that this compilation will prove to be useful to all who wish to know more about the Bassetts. While in the several accounts of them there is found some repetition of the same events, each author has something to say that is not included in the excerpts of other authors. Therefore, those who wish to gain the greatest possible amount about the Bassetts should read through the whole compilation.

To aid in the identification of the various groups and different excerpts within groups, I have placed 7 stars (asterisks) at the head of every new group of excerpts, and between excerpts in the same group I have placed 3 stars. -- DVM

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Part 2

BASSETT EXCERPTS -- BY JOHN LEDNUM

Taken From: Lednum's Methodist History -- hdm0324.tex

Mr. Richard Bassett, of Dover, Delaware, had his first interview with Mr. Asbury, it appears, in 1778, at Mr. Thomas White's. He was going to Maryland on professional business, and called to pass a night with Judge White. As the family was passing through the house, and opening and shutting the doors, he observed one or more persons who seemed to be occupying a private room. Inquiring of Mrs. White who they were, dressed in sable garments, keeping themselves so retiredly, she replied: "O, they are some of the best men in the world -- they are Methodist preachers." Having heard of them before, he seemed to be alarmed at his close proximity to them, and observed "Then I cannot stay here tonight." Mrs. White replied: "O, yes; you must stay -- they will not hurt you." Supper being ready, they all sat down at the table. Mr. Asbury had considerable conversation with Mr. Bassett, by which he was convinced that Methodist preachers were not so ignorant, or unsociable, as to make them outcasts from civil society. On taking leave, he invited Mr. Asbury, more from custom than desire, to call on him in case he visited Dover. When Mr. Bassett returned home, and informed his wife that he had been in company with Methodist preachers, and had invited one of them to his house, she was greatly troubled; but was quieted when he told her: "It is not likely that he will come." Sometime in 1779, Mr. Bassett looked out of his window, and saw Mr. Asbury making for his door. Wishing to have company to help on the

conversation, Mr. Bassett stepped out and invited Doctor McGaw, Governor Rodney, and some others to tea. They sat down to the table, and became so deeply interested in conversation, that they continued it until a late hour. This was the beginning of a friendship which lasted thirty-six years.

Soon after Mr. Thomas White united with the Methodists he had occasion to go to Dover on business, and stayed all night with Mr. Bassett. Mr. White, like most others who countenanced the Methodists at that day, was marked as a Tory. Some of the rabble went in search of him, declaring their intention to inflict summary punishment upon him in case they found him. They came to Mr. Bassett's door, who was at that time captain of a militia company. Mr. Bassett took his stand in his entry, with his sword and pistols; and when the mob inquired if Thomas White was there, and asked that he might be given to them to be punished as an enemy of his country, Mr. Bassett told them that Mr. White was in his house -- that he was no more of a Tory than any one of them; and if they got him into their hands, they would have to walk over his dead body. Well knowing the standing and influence of Mr. Bassett with the community, the raging rabble retired without their victim; and Judge White was saved through the chivalry of his friend.

Mr. Bassett had married Miss Ann Ennalls of Dorchester county, Md., sister of Mr. Henry Ennalls, and niece of Judge Ennalls, of the same county.

Under date of February, 1780, Mr. Asbury says: "Went home with lawyer Bassett, a very conversant and affectionate man, who, from his own acknowledgments, appears to be sick of sin. His wife is under great distress -- a gloom of dejection sits upon her soul; she prays much, and the enemy takes advantage of her low state. Shortly afterward she obtained the comfort she was seeking; and it was not long before Mr. Bassett submitted to the reign of Christ. The following is, in substance, his own account of his conversion to God. At the time of the conversion of his wife and her sisters, as he was moving in a fashionable circle, he was somewhat perplexed in his mind, on account of the noisy Methodists. In this state he resolved that as soon as he got through with a cause that he had to manage in the court at Lewistown, to sell his property, and move to some distant part of the country to get clear of them. One night while he was at Lewistown, he dreamed that two devils in black came to his bedside to take him away. He began to tremble and pray. The devils vanished, and two beautiful angels, clad in white, stood by his bedside. Casting his eyes towards the corner of the room, he saw an aged, grave looking man, sitting in an armed chair, frowning upon him. A beautiful child advanced to the aged man, who continued to frown, and fondled around him. On this his sins were brought to his recollection. It appeared to him that the aged man represented the Father, justly displeased with his sins. That the little child fondling, represented Christ in intercession. The angels might represent the Holy Spirit, directing the ministers of the gospel, or his sisters, who were presenting him in prayer. He awoke, in raptures, and dedicated himself to God. Mrs. Bassett, who had been earnestly praying for him, dreamed the same night that God had taken her husband into his favor. When he came home, he joyfully related what the Lord had done for him. She replied: 'I knew it; for the blessed Lord made it known to me.'

"

Mrs. Bassett did not live many years; but while she lived she was a bright example of holiness, and left the world praising God. Mr. Bassett's second wife, it appears, was a Garnet, a Talbot county lady; and an ardent Christian. Wesley Chapel, in Dover, was erected in 1784, principally by Mr. Bassett's means, at which time he had not joined the Methodists; he was united

to them soon after the organization of the Church. It was the expectation of Mr. Asbury that the Lord would make a preacher of him; and often did he preach many things to the people in his exhortations. He has been heard in St. George's. Mr. John Wilmer, son of Lambert Wilmer, one of the original Methodists of Philadelphia, remembers to have seen Mr. Bassett in St. George's, and heard him sing: he says "he was an excellent singer."

In an exhortation in the old log Bethesda Chapel, on the Manor, where his family worshipped, in meeting the skeptic's position of doubting and disbelieving whatever he cannot test by his senses, he wished to know "How a man could believe, by this rule, that he had a back, as he could not see it, unless he had a neck like a crane or a goose." Quaint as this language was, it was better suited to the populace than if it had smacked more of metaphysics. Estimating him according to his standing, influence, and usefulness in the community, we may present him, as important a member as has belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church.

About the year 1795, he was settled on his large estate on Bohemia Manor. As he was both wealthy and liberal, his house was a principal resort for Methodist preachers. Bassett's house was to them, on the Peninsula, what Mr. Gough's was on the Western Shore of Maryland. Mr. Bassett was seldom without some one of the Methodist preachers, and often had a number of them together. When the Rev. Joseph Jewel became supernumerary, he lived with him as the steward of his house.

When camp meetings were adopted by us, no longer annoyed by the noise of the Methodists, he was pleased to pitch his tent near the tents of the darkies, and called their music his harp. He had a tent at the first camp meeting held on the Peninsula, in 1805, at Farson's Hill, near Smyrna; and when Mrs. Bassett was shouting, full of the love of God, as she often was, she would as soon embrace a pious dusky daughter of Africa, in her rejoicing, as a white sister. Methodism had not, as yet, put on brocade slippers and gold spectacles.

While Mr. Bassett lived on the Manor, he had two camp meetings in a beautiful grove on his land, a mile north of his mansion at Bohemia Ferry. The first was held in 1808, and was followed by a great revival and reformation. The second was held in 1809. Among others that attended this meeting, was the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson. Some account of it is found on page 224 of his Life. Under date of January, 1783, he [Garrettson] says, "I am once more among my Dover friends. Surely God is among this people. The last Sabbath I preached here the Lord in mercy laid his hand upon one of the greatest persecutors in this town. In his distress he cried mightily to God, until he converted his soul; and also his wife, and his sister-in-law; and now he is resolutely determined on helping to build a brick chapel. I visited Sister Bassett, who, in her affliction, is one of the happiest women I have met with a living witness of sanctification, whose soul seems to be continually wrapped in a flame of love. Several of this family are happy in the love of God; and four of them profess to enjoy perfect love. Surely God has a church in Mr. Bassett's house."

After these camp meetings, the Manor became famous for Methodism; in almost every family, Methodists were found. Wherever Mr. Bassett's influence extended, he did not suffer a drop of distilled liquor to be used. His house and table were very plain; while he was doing all in his power for the cause of God. After this meeting, Mr. Garrettson, who had known Mr. Bassett for thirty years, saw him no more in this world.

Near the camp ground was a spring of excellent water, under which was a bed of marl [a mixture of clay and lime]. Many who came to these meetings, took their meals at this spring, and drank of its water. Of late years, in taking out the marl, many cups, knives, and forks have been found that were lost by the people an age before. In 1848, the grove in which the camp meetings were held, fell before the woodman's axe; and the beautiful oaks, which, had they had tongues, could have told a pleasing tale of the triumph of truth of the joy of new born souls, and the rejoicing of saints with "joy unspeakable, and full of glory," have for ever disappeared. At that time Methodists would go to camp meetings a great distance; Messrs. Levis and Pancoast, from near Darby, Pa., took a tent to one of these meetings on the Manor.

In 1787, Mr. Bassett was a member of the Convention which formed the Constitution of the United States of America. Soon after, he was a member of Congress; also, governor of Delaware state.

In the latter end of his life, Mr. Bassett was Judge of the United States District Court for Delaware. At this time, it seems, he had three furnished houses; his old home in Dover, his principal one on the Manor, and one in Wilmington. In person, he was a heavy-built man; and the last year of his life he was a paralytic. Mr. Asbury notices him, for the last time, in 1815. He says, "My long-loved friend, Judge Bassett, some time past a paralytic, is lately stricken on the other side, and suffers much, in his helpless state." As it is the tendency of this disease to affect the mind, he gave some evidence that his intellect had suffered, by entertaining certain notions, inculcated by a Sister Cain, that was much at his house, concerning the speedy commencement of the millennium, and the consequent exemption of Christians from death. The last time he spoke in love feast, in Wilmington, he told his brethren that he never expected to die. Such language, so far from showing the least obliquity of heart or life, only evinced that the wish had been father to the thought. As nearly as we can ascertain, he died in the latter end of 1815. His funeral was attended by a large concourse of people, at his mansion on the Manor; a number of ministers were present, among whom was the Rev. Henry Boehm, presiding elder of the district, who took part in the exercises; the sermon was preached by the Rev. Ezekiel Cooper. In a locust grove that overlooks the Bohemia river, where the wild brier in tangled luxuriance grows, in a vault that he had prepared, his remains were deposited; all that we ever saw of this once strong man, was in this vault, after decomposition had operated for an age.

In this vault, also, rest the remains of his son-in-law, in a leaden coffin; and other members of the family.

Mr. Bassett raised but one child. She was a Methodist. The Hon. James Bayard, an eminent lawyer and statesman, who was associated with Messrs. Gallatin, Russell, Adams, and Clay, in negotiating the Treaty of Ghent in 1814, married her. He died soon after his return from Europe. Mr. Bayard studied law under Mr. Bassett. They frequently debated experimental Christianity, as Mr. Bayard regarded all religious excitement as enthusiasm and fanaticism. When they met, it was Greek meeting Greek, and diamond cutting diamond. Sometimes Mr. Bassett would cut him short by saying, "All you know, I taught you;" and would be answered, "You taught me all you knew, and all I know beside, I taught myself." Soon after Mr. Bassett's death, his old mansion burned down;

"For, the fashion or this world passeth away." A bowing wall and a few sycamores mark the spot where it stood.

About the time of his death, several of the heads of the Methodist congregation were taken away:-- In 1814 Bishop Coke, in 1815 Governor Van Courtlandt, of New York, as well as Governor Bassett, of Delaware; in 1816 Mr. Shadford, Bishop Asbury, and the Rev. Jesse Lee.

When Mr. Bassett's house was consumed, many old and valuable paintings perished. One of its large halls was lined with them. Many of them had belonged to Augustine Herman, the founder of Bohemia Manor. His likeness, and that of his lady, perished; also, the painting representing his flight from the Dutch in New York, by means of his famous war charger. There are people still living, who saw these paintings, again and again, before they were destroyed. There were others, representing scenes illustrating events connected with the settlement of America.

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With a heavy heart, Mr. Ware went to the Peninsula; sorry to leave some of his old companions in Mount Holly, who were serious on account of sin; and for whom he labored, in hope of seeing them converted to God. He felt, like many others, that it was engaging in an awfully responsible calling, and with, going among strangers; but, the simplicity, urbanity, and fervent piety" of the Methodists on Dover Circuit, made him feel that he was in the right place; after visiting a society, he longed to return to it again. Here he found some Methodists in the first circle of life; who, in the midst of wealth, were following the self-denying Saviour. Some of the females, such as Judge White's wife, Mrs. Bassett; and her sisters, Mrs. Ward, and Mrs. Jones, were distinguished for piety and zeal, above any that he had ever seen. He found many young people seeking religion, and had the happiness of receiving many of them into society. In his public ministrations he was often constrained to weep over the people, whose tears answered to his; in tears he sowed, that he might reap in joy.

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Mr. Francis Hollingsworth was the first gentleman of much wealth, that consorted with the Methodists. Next, Mr. Gough, who it seems, was worth nearly a quarter of a million of dollars. Now, Mr. Fairfax. In 1780, Mr. Richard Bassett, who, in his day, was wealthy and influential. About the year 1787, Mr. James Robert, of South Carolina, a man of much wealth, became a Methodist. In 1790, General Hardy Bryan, of North Carolina, and General Russell, of Virginia. About the same time, Lieutenant Governor Van Courtlandt, of New York, and General Lippett, of Rhode Island. These individuals, as nearly as we can ascertain, were the most distinguished by their wealth and position in society, of any that became Methodists in the last century, when Methodism was planted in their respective neighborhoods. But, let it be remembered, that no one was retained in society at that day, merely on account of his money. These wealthy families conformed to Methodist rule and discipline as strictly as the poor slaves, with whom they mingled in worship.

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Part 3

BASSETT EXCERPTS -- BY MATTHEW SIMPSON

Taken From: Methodist Character Sketches -- hdm0268.tex

BASSETT, Richard, of Dover, Del., was one among the early and prominent Methodists in that State. He first met Bishop Asbury in 1778, at Judge White's, and such was his prejudice that he was unwilling to converse with him; but after forming his acquaintance, invited him to his house. He was a man of large means and extensive business. After the conversion of his wife, he was so troubled that he purposed to sell his property and remove to a distant section of the country, but shortly afterwards, when absent from home, he was converted, and became a devoted member of the church. Wesley chapel, in Dover, was erected, chiefly by his means, in 1784. He was an excellent singer, an earnest exhorter, and loved to attend camp-meetings, two of which he had in a beautiful grove on his land. His house was ever open for Methodist preachers, and he formed among them an extensive acquaintance. In 1787, Mr. Bassett was a member of the convention which formed the Constitution of the United States. Shortly after he served as a member of Congress, and also as governor of the State of Delaware. In the latter part of his life he was judge of the United States District Court. He died of paralysis in 1815, leaving an only child, a daughter, who was married to Hon. James Bayard, who had studied law under Mr. Bassett. Governor Bassett owned six thousand acres of land in Bohemia Manor, which he had inherited. On it he built a log chapel, where many of the itinerants preached. Bishop Whatcoat died at his house in 1806. In his memoir it is said, "He lived a bright example of holiness, and left the world praising God."

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Part 4

BASSETT EXCERPTS -- BY ABEL STEVENS

Taken From: Stevens' M. E. History, Vol. 1 -- hdm0216.tex

Richard Bassett, of Dover, Delaware, was a man of pre-eminence in the civil and social life of these times. He first met Asbury in his concealment at Judge White's residence. On a professional journey to Maryland, he called there to spend a night with his friend, the Judge. As a door in the house was opened he observed Asbury, with some other Preachers, apparently retired in quiet conversation, and inquired of Mrs. White who "they were, dressed in sable garments and keeping themselves aside?" "They are some of the best men in the world; they are Methodist Preachers," replied the hostess. He was evidently disturbed by this intelligence, and observed, "Then I cannot stay here tonight." "You must stay; they cannot hurt you," rejoined the lady. Supper being ready, they all sat down at the table. Asbury had considerable conversation with Bassett, by which he was convinced that Methodist Preachers were not so ignorant or unsociable as to make them outcasts from civil society. On taking leave, he invited Asbury, more from custom than desire, to call on him in case he visited Dover. When Bassett returned home and informed his wife that he had been in company with Methodist Preachers, and had invited one of them to his house, she was greatly troubled; but was quieted when he told her, "It is not likely that he will come." But some time later, Bassett, while looking out of his window, saw the itinerant approaching. That

evening Asbury charmed by his conversation a large circle at the tea-table, till late into the night; and for nearly twoscore years Richard Bassett was his unfailing friend.

Bassett was a man of bravery and generosity. Not long after White had joined the Methodists he visited his friend at Dover, and spent a night with him. All Methodists were then denounced as Tories, and the rabble, hearing of White's presence, approached Bassett's house to seize him. Bassett was a militia officer, and, with drawn sword, defied them at his door. "He is no more a Tory than you are," he shouted; "you shall have him only by passing over my dead body." He compelled them to fall back and leave the premises. Bassett's chivalric character and high standing were not to be trifled with, and his friend remained unmolested.

Subsequently Asbury, on visiting the family, describes Bassett as "a very conversant and affectionate man, who, from his own acknowledgments, appears to be sick of sin. His wife is under great distress -- she prays much." It was not long before she was rejoicing in the consolation of the Gospel, and her husband followed in her steps. They became zealous and exemplary Methodists. He lived a bright example of holiness, and left the world praising God." He often preached, and was the chief founder of "Wesley Chapel," in Dover. "Estimating him," says a Methodist historian, "according to his standing, influence, and usefulness in the community, he was as important a member as has belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church."

He had three residences, one in Dover, one in Wilmington, and another at Bohemia Manor, a famous locality in the early Methodist annals. All of them were favorite homes of the Methodist itinerants, and scenes of early Quarterly Conferences and other extraordinary meetings. Bohemia Manor consisted of 18,000 acres on the Bohemia and Elk Rivers. Bassett owned 6,000 of the best of these acres. He had a famous "old log Bethesda Chapel" on the Manor, in which the greatest heroes of primitive Methodism sounded their trumpets. His mansion there was as noted a resort of Methodist Preachers as Perry Hall on the Western Shore of Maryland; "it was seldom without some one of them, and often had a number of them together." The generous lawyer received one of them, broken down with age and labor, as superintendent of his household.

His groves sometimes resounded with the melodies of Methodist camp-meetings. The Manor became "famous for Methodism; in almost every family Methodists were found. Wherever Mr. Bassett's influence extended, he did not suffer a drop of distilled liquor to be used. His house and table were very plain; while he was doing all in his power for the cause of God." His high character secured the respect of his fellow-citizens. They sent him as their delegate to the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, and as their Senator in Congress, and elected him Governor of their state.

Asbury, seeing him at last smitten with paralysis, called him his "long-loved friend," and in a few months followed him to heaven. He died in the faith in 1815, and his funeral, at the Manor, was attended by a great concourse of Methodists and other citizens. Henry Boehm, the traveling companion of Asbury, presided over the religious services of the occasion; Ezekiel Cooper preached his funeral sermon.

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At Dover, the scene of one of his severest trials, he [Garrettson] rejoiced, in 1783 over a successful Church, Bassett and his family being now among its chief supporters. "Surely," he wrote, "God is among this people. The last Sabbath I preached here the Lord in mercy laid his hand upon one of the greatest persecutors in the town. Finding no rest, he cried mightily to God, and both he and his wife were converted, and his brother's wife; they are now happy in religion, going on hand in hand with the brethren; and he is resolutely determined on building a brick chapel. Shall we not give the glory to God, who can change the hearts of lion-like men and women in so short a time? God has done and is doing great things for the people in this town. I visited Mrs. Bassett, who has been a long time under the afflicting hand of divine Providence. I think her one of the happiest women I have met with. I believe her to be a living witness of sanctification; her soul seems to be continually wrapped in a flame of love. Several of this family are happy in the love of God; four of whom enjoy that degree of it which casts out fear. Surely God has a Church in this house."

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In the autumn of 1783 he was about to depart to the Carolinas, determined to push the triumphs of the Gospel to the furthest South; but he was suddenly arrested by the news of Coke's arrival, and the important events which were immediately to follow. Coke soon reached him, at the house of Bassett, in Dover, and says: "here I met with an excellent young man, Freeborn Garrettson. He seems to be all meekness and love, and yet all activity. He makes me quite ashamed, for he invariably rises at four in the morning, and not only he, but several others of the preachers. Him we sent off like an arrow, from north to south, directing him to send messengers to the right and left, and to gather all the preachers together at Baltimore on Christmas eve."

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Taken From: Stevens M. E. History, Vol. 2 -- hdm0219.tex

Thus was Thomas Ware sent forth, in 1783, to begin his long and successful career. His reception on Dover Circuit was so cordial and hospitable, that he always recalled it with grateful interest. "I was made," he says, "to forget that I was among strangers. The simplicity, urbanity, and fervent piety of the Methodists were such that, after visiting a Society once, it seemed long before I was to return to it again. Some of the members were wealthy, and in the higher circles of life; but they were not ashamed to bear the cross. Among these there were some, particularly a number of females, distinguished for piety and zeal, such as I had never before witnessed.

"The lady of Counselor Bassett, and her two sisters, Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Ward, possessed an uncommon degree of the true missionary spirit, and greatly aided the young preachers, by whom, principally, the Lord was carrying on his work on that favored shore. To these might be added others, and especially the wife of Judge White, who was a mother in Israel. I had the happiness of receiving many young people into society.

"In Class-meetings I felt much at home, and frequently our rejoicing in the Lord was great. In my public exercises I was sometimes greatly embarrassed, when tears came to my relief, which was often the case; and there are few who can resist the eloquence of tears. In the mean time I

prayed and read and wrote much. My Bible was my chief book. After having been blessed in attempting to preach, I ventured, formally, to take a text; but not until advised, by some whom I considered competent judges, that my gift was rather to preach than to exhort."

* * *

Taken From: Stevens' M. E. History, Vol. 3 -- hdm0226.tex

Excessive work relieved him [Bishop Asbury], but only temporarily; the ravages of death among his old companions in the struggles and success of Methodism, deeply affected him; he sought refuge and consolation with Bassett, at Bohemia Manor, a scene thronged with old memories. "I have great inward distress," he writes, for here he was again reminded that all things pass away. "Dear Brother B[assett], who attended me with his carriage to North East the last time I was here, is now gone to rest. O how short is the life of man! O my Lord, help me through all my afflictions! Ah! what a comfortable thing it is to be among the ancient Methodists! But this is not always my place; indeed, it cannot be. Still under awful depression. I am not conscious of any sin, even in thought. I feel a degree of willingness to decline, die, and enter into rest."

Yet he took courage. "I have a hope that God is preparing me for greater usefulness in my latter days. O how happy should I be, if after laboring thirty years to very little profit, as I sometimes fear, it should hereafter appear that hundreds have been converted by my ministry! I came to the dwelling-house of my dear friend Judge White; it was like his funeral to me."

* * *

Taken From: Stevens M. E. History, Vol. 4 -- hdm0244.tex

"In Philadelphia, it is said, there is a very great revival of religion, and near one hundred have been added to the society in two weeks." Senator Bassett wrote to Asbury from Dover, Del., in 1801: "Glory to God, he has done wonders! About one hundred and thirteen, white and black, were joined in society yesterday, and, from what I hear, I doubt not but as many, if not twice the number, who went away wounded and crippled, sick and sore, will be joined in different parts of the country; all the fruits of this blessed meeting."

Bassett was practically a lay evangelist among his neighbors. He held at Dover a sort of annual protracted meeting, with daily preaching and prayer-meetings at sunrise, for a whole week. "O the wonders of redeeming love!" he writes in 1802; "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. I conceive I am within bounds when I say the congregations this day, had they been numbered, were seven thousand souls. I say congregations, for such was the multitude, it was found necessary to have three preachers engaged at the same time, the congregations at a proper distance from each other; and this was not enough, a fourth congregation might have been found. Surely the scene was awful; a time to be remembered, and a day of great solemnity. The power of God was great among saints and sinners. We had also a glorious day and night both in the house of God, and my own house; several were powerfully awakened, at private houses, in times of singing and prayer. On Monday sinners began to be greatly alarmed and powerfully agitated in mind. On Tuesday, after preaching, the sacrament was administered. This was the most gracious, solemn,

and rejoicing time I ever saw. I conclude there were not less than between twelve and fifteen hundred who came to the Lord's table, white and colored people. In this exercise many sinners were cut to the heart, and powerful convictions took place, most of which I believe ended in sound conversions, and many backsliders were reclaimed. O the astonishing goodness of the all-wonder-working God! I presume there were not less than from twenty to thirty souls converted or sanctified in my own house during the meeting. Blessed be God for it. I know you will say in your heart, Amen. The two last days our meeting was the best, and so it was at the last yearly meeting. Our blessed God, in both stances, kept the best wine to the last. We continued till three o'clock on Friday morning. It gave me some grief that we did not hold out longer, because I saw such an uncommon thirst in the hearts of the people of God. There must have been some hundreds awakened."

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In 1800 ... Ware had charge of Bassett's protracted meeting, and "there were few of the principal houses in Dover in which there were not some converted during it; and more than once the whole night was employed, both in the church and private houses, in prayer for penitents, and in rejoicing with those who had obtained an evidence of pardon, or were reclaimed from their backslidings." So profound was the interest all over his district, that he says we knew not what to do with the thousands who attended the quarterly meetings. "Sometimes we were forced to resort to the woods, and even to hold our love-feasts in the grove. Our membership increased rapidly." He spent the remainder of the period in arduous labors on the Philadelphia and Jersey Districts.

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Taken From: "The Women of Methodism" -- hdm0360.tex

As Asbury extended his travels southward such friends and wayside homes multiplied, and not a few of them have become historical in the annals of the denomination. Mary White, Ann Ennalls Bassett, Prudence Gough, and many other names, continually meet the eye in our early biographies and journals.

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Part 5 BASSETT EXCERPTS -- BY EZRA SQUIER TIPPLE

Taken From: "The Heart of Asbury's Journal" -- hdm0560.tex

[Since the entries in Asbury's Journal are dated, I have omitted the stars between the excerpts. -- DVM]

SEPTEMBER 12, 1779 -- I preached to the people, who came to church, at Mr. Bassett's door, on Gal. 2:19; in the afternoon, in the woods, to the most people I ever saw here, and had liberty.

OCTOBER 16, 1797 -- We rode to Bohemia Ferry, twenty miles. Dr. Ridgely has sent me a plenty of Columbo magnesia, soluble tartar, and bark. I spent the evening at Mr. Bassett's, and lectured upon a chapter.

MARCH 27, 1809 -- At Barratt's Chapel I preached and baptized some children. I had powerful feelings of sympathy for the children and grandchildren of that holy man in life and death, Philip Barratt. My dear friends, Governor Bassett and his lady, came nearly forty miles to meet me.

APRIL 21, 1813 -- There was a high wind, and I set out, feeble and faint, and reached Wilmington. I lodged with Governor Bassett. My peace flows like a river. I suppose we have, in sixteen circuits, ten chapels in each. I preached for the folks in Wilmington.

APRIL 6, 1815 -- Stopped at Bethel, spoke a little and prayed. We dropped anchor at Richard Bassett's until better weather. Saturday I sent forward John Smith to fill my appointment. My unpleasant cough still cleaves to me. Bohemia Manor was formerly the field in which the Whitefield Methodists, called New Lights, labored with success; the Wesleyan Methodists are heirs to these, according to the gospel.

APRIL 9, 1815 -- We would have attended meeting today, but we wished not to ride fourteen miles. We called a meeting at Richard Bassett's, and took occasion to speak of the work of God in the days of the New Lights, sixty years past.

JULY 4, 1815 -- Happy at Mother Boehm's. A pleasing providence, according to my wishes, had brought Henry in a few minutes before us. Ah, the changes we witness My long-loved friend, Judge Bassett, some time past a paralytic, is lately restricken on the other side, and suffers much in his helpless state.

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Taken From: "Francis Asbury, The Prophet of the Long Road" -- hdm0562.tex

In his journeyings the itinerant bishop had a myriad of interesting experiences. He came in contact with 'all sorts and conditions of men' and women. The Man Without a Home had a thousand homes throughout the land where at the fireside he was ever an honored guest. Early Methodism had not a few most beautiful and far-famed homes, and in these no man found a warmer welcome than Bishop Asbury. At Perry Hall, the home of Henry Dorsey Gough, near Baltimore, considered one of the most elegant country residences in America at the time; in the spacious mansion of Governor Van Cortlandt, that hearty Methodist whose influence helped Methodism throughout New York State; in the Delaware home of Richard Bassett; at General Russell's, whose wife was a sister of Patrick Henry, on the West Virginia Heights; at Governor Tiffin's, in Ohio; at Wildercliffe, the beautiful home of Freeborn Garrettson on the Hudson, which Asbury called 'Traveler's Rest,' and which Boehm says 'the bishop delighted to visit,' and in other like households the tired traveler found himself among dear friends, who rejoiced to minister unto him. But in other less pretentious homes he was the recipient of equally generous kindnesses. 'Came to my old friend, B. Boydstone's. I had the happiness of seeing that tender woman his wife, who

careth for the preachers, as for her own soul; full oft hath she refreshed my spirit.' In many places the utmost kindness was shown him, and was always appreciated. He never fails to make mention in his Journal of courtesies shown him:

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'I had so many friends I knew not where to go,' [Asbury wrote on one occasion; on another, 'My dear friend Governor Bassett and his lady came forty miles to meet me.' This seems to have been a custom with many of his friends, to ride to meet him and accompany him on his journey. It was only in this way that he could give time to the cultivation of his friendships. He never loitered, never was betrayed by the joys of fellowship into tarrying. 'My friends came in haste and gladness to see me. We prayed and parted, for time was precious.

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THE END