

Celebrating the 280<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of Christ Church in New Brunswick, June 3, 2023, by Elizabeth Ciccone, Treasurer and Social Media Manager, New Brunswick Historical Society



*CHRIST  
CHURCH: OUR  
PEOPLE IN  
SERVICE,  
THEN AND  
NOW*

# THE CHURCH BUILDING

- One of the oldest structures in City of New Brunswick, with the tower dating to c. 1745. Listed on the State of NJ and National Registers of Historic Places 1989.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> reading of the Declaration of Independence was held at the foot of the church tower, July 8, 1776.
- May 11, 1784, the Corporation for the Relief of Widows and Children of Episcopal Clergymen in America meets in Christ Church. The announcement for the meeting comes from the Political Intelligencer and New Jersey Advertiser, a newspaper being published in our City at the time. The meeting is attended by clergy and laity from NJ, NY, and PA. Resolutions adopted at this meeting become the basis of the First General Convention, needed to separate the Episcopal Church from the Church of England (aka Anglican Church) after the Revolutionary War. The meeting led to the adoption of the Book of Common Prayer and the establishment of the Episcopal Church in America.

**T**H E members of the Corporation for the relief of Widows and Children of Episcopal Clergymen in America, are desired to meet at New-Brunswick, in New Jersey, on Tuesday the eleventh day of May next.

All Episcopal Clergymen, and those Gentlemen of the Laity, who wish the prosperity of their Church, (though not members of the Corporation) are desired to attend at the same time and place, as matters of general concern will be then discussed.

Divine service will begin at Eleven o'clock in the morning.

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# *DIFFICULT HISTORY*

*Some history is not pleasant to learn about. While this is a happy occasion, celebrating 280 years of Christ Church, there are aspects the Church's history which are difficult. The land the Church is built upon was stolen from Native Americans. Some members of the Congregation owned enslaved persons. Most of the Church leadership over the years were white middle-aged men. We cannot change this. We can only hope to do better. In an effort to do better, the 280<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee has asked me to acknowledge these things in my presentation. If we do not recognize our faults, we cannot work to ameliorate them.*



# *DIFFICULT HISTORY*



*Last year, New Brunswick Historical Society (NBHS) had the privilege of collaborating with Christ Church, Thinkery & Verse, and the Middlesex County Arts Council to unpack the history of Dinah, a Black and enslaved woman whose real name may have been Daana Wilson. Her life in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick mirrors the complexity of American and British Colonial history. She lived through over 100 years of American history, c. 1760 – 1866, and the broad expanse of Dinah's life invites us to remember the many people who consider this their ancestral home.*

# *THE CONGREGATION IS THE CHURCH*

Parishioners of  
Christ Church in  
service throughout  
history.

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# *Parishioners in Service*

- In researching the history of Christ Church, one aspect which stood out was that members of the Congregation were involved in service to the community.
- Parishioners interacted with the community directly through the church, and through all other aspects of daily life. We will emphasize these other areas of service in this talk.
- In this way, the energy vision of the Church, "...to share God's love through our relationships with each other and our extended communities," has been fulfilled throughout the Church's history, and into modern times.
- **DISCLAIMER: PLEASE NOTE THAT NO LIST CAN EVER BE COMPLETE WITH EVERY MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION!** Apologies in advance if I miss one of your favorite historical figures or family members.





## *Military Service*

Many congregants of  
Christ Church served in  
the Armed Forces of the  
United States.

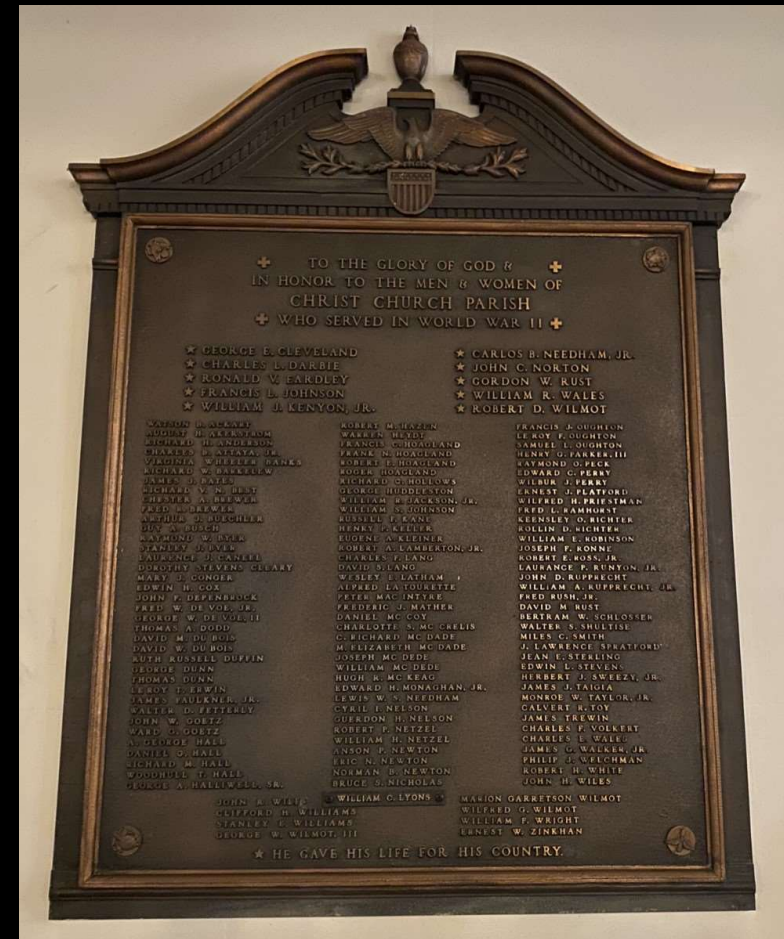
# Military Service

One reason it was easy to prepare the material for this presentation, is that this Congregation has done well at commemorating its parishioners' achievements through plaques and signage. The one shown is a marker that reads as follows:

"To the Glory of God & in honor to the men & women of Christ Church Parish who served in World War II"

It has crosses next to the names of those who gave their lives.

There are many such plaques throughout the Church and support buildings.





# *Military Service*

- Brigadier General Anthony Walton White, Revolutionary War, his parents built Buccleuch Mansion.
- Colonel Azariah Dunham, Revolutionary War, First Mayor of New Brunswick under the Royal Charter of 1730.
- General John Heard, Revolutionary War, New Jersey Militia Cavalry. Surrogate of Middlesex County, NJ. United States Marshall for New Jersey.



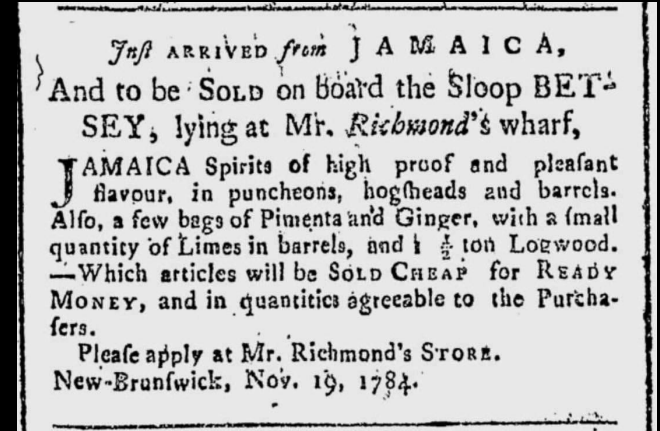
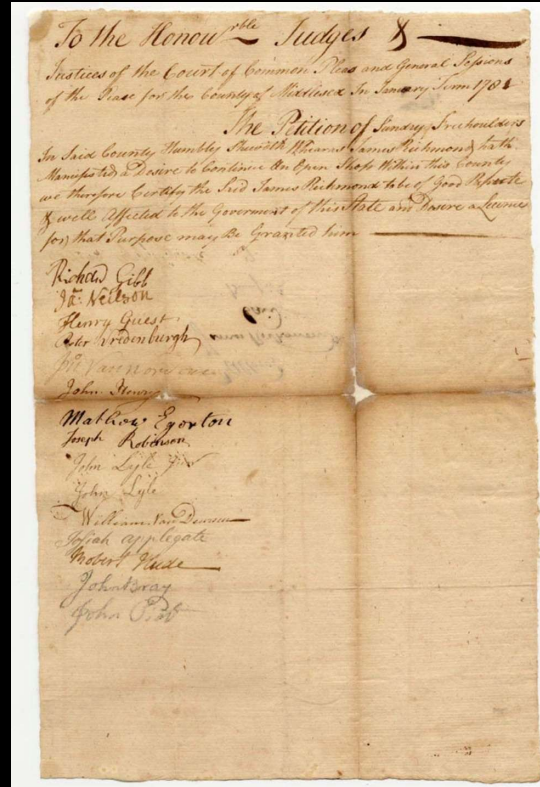
# *Military Service*



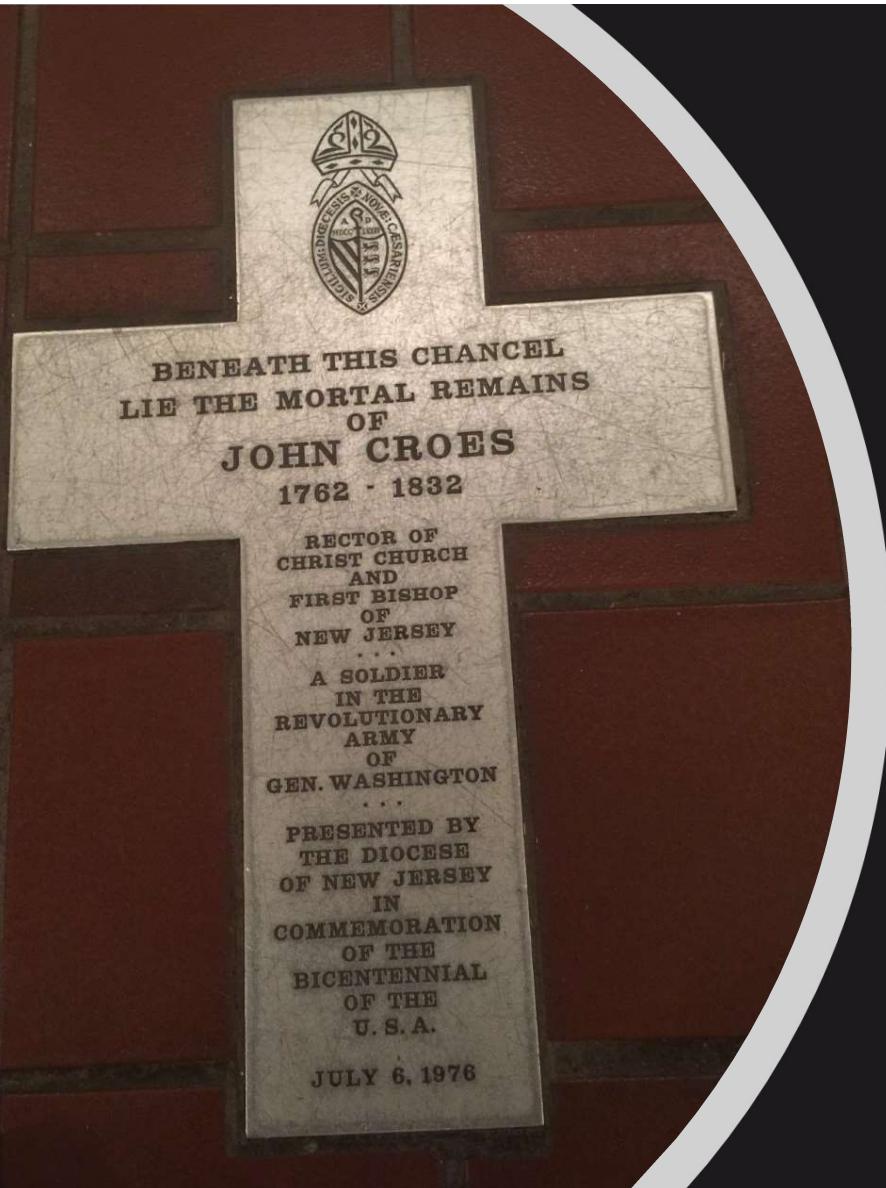
- Rear Admiral Charles Stuart Boggs, Civil War, Mexican War, one of several members of the Boggs family in military service. Admiral Boggs was married to Sophia Dore Boggs, who was most likely the one that brought the enslaved person, Daana Wilson to New Brunswick.
- Colonel Alexander Hamilton Jr., Civil War. Yes, son of THAT Alexander Hamilton. Also served as Secretary of the United States Legation at Madrid, a diplomatic mission in Spain, 1848-1850.
- Major John Antill, Revolutionary War – Loyalist. Donated the font at the entrance to the Church.

## Major James Richmond

During the Revolutionary War, merchants in NJ counties bordering enemy territory (meaning loyal to the British) were required to apply for a license to open a shop. Petitioners had to solicit signatures from 15 "reputable and well-affected" freeholders from the same county, certifying the applicant to also be of good repute and "well-affected" to the government of the state (meaning on the side of the Patriots). This 1781 petition for James Richmond's license has been signed by several New Brunswick notables, including Henry Guest, James Neilson, John Lyle Sr. and Jr., Mathew Egerton, Josiah Applegate, and Robert Hude. Some of these names are still important in our City, honored as Richmond Street, Neilson Street, Lyle Brook, and the Henry Guest House.



By 1784, James Richmond is selling Jamaican rum off the sloop Betsey by his wharf on the Raritan River near to Richmond Street which is named for him. He claims the rum is high proof with a pleasant flavor. He also has pimenta, ginger, and limes. Sounds like the makings of a cocktails!



## *Clergy / Service through the Church*

Christ Church clergy have served the Church and the community. Laity have served the community through Church initiatives.



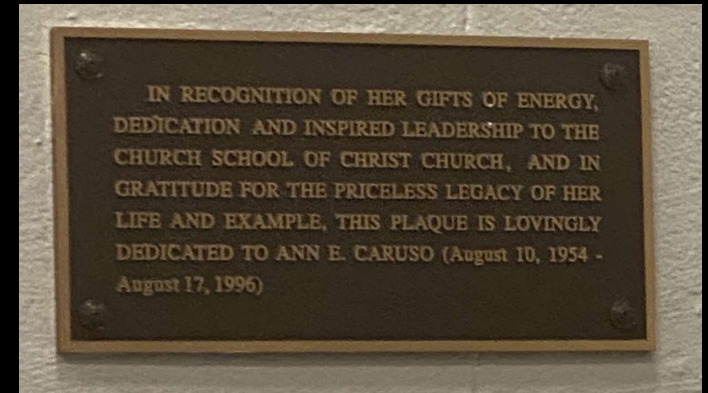
# *Clergy / Service through the Church*

- Reverend Samuel Seabury, one of the earliest rectors, was the first American Episcopal bishop, the second Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in America, and the first Bishop of Connecticut. He was a leading Loyalist during the American Revolution and a known rival of Alexander Hamilton.
- Reverend John Croes, another early rector, served in the Revolutionary War as a sergeant and quartermaster. He went on to ministry, and was so highly regarded that he is buried under the Chancel. Croes was symbolic of the Episcopal Church ceasing to be exclusively English, coming from a lower class background, restoring a more democratized and simple Christian character to the episcopate. He was also active in Rutgers Preparatory School, serving as Principal.



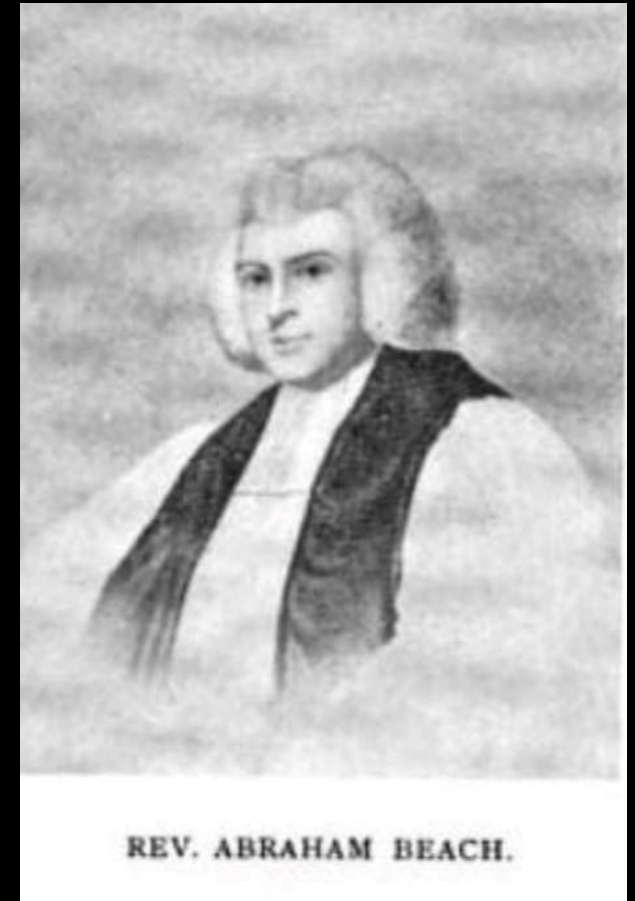
# *Clergy / Service through the Church*

- Sara Hobson: Member of Ross Guild of Christ Church. Affiliated with the Visiting Nurses Association of NJ.
- Ann E. Caruso: Leader in the Church School, plaque from Congregation.
- Ruth H. Durham: Donated large quantity of books to Douglass College and Rutgers University. Served on Middlesex County Hospital Board.



# *Rev. Abraham Beach*

- Reverend of Christ Church during the Revolutionary War – Loyalist
- He became Grand Chaplain to the Free and Accepted Masons of NY
- He was also a Trustee at Rutgers U (then Queen's College) and at Columbia U. He was a founder of Rutgers Preparatory School
- His home ultimately became a portion of Rprep's administration building when one of his descendants sold it to them in the 1950's.



## *Nicholas G. Rutgers*



Nicholas G. Rutgers Sr. came to our City in his youth and attended Rutgers Preparatory School. He started his career with the Norfolk & New Brunswick Hosiery Co. Later he began working for the New Brunswick Savings Institution, working his way up, ultimately retiring as President. He was a member of Christ Church, serving as Treasurer and Warden. He was an avid Rutgers U Football fan, attending most of their afternoon practice sessions and most of their games.







## *Service through Education*

Christ Church clergy and laity  
have long been involved with  
education in our community.

# *Service through Education*

- Elisabeth Nicholas Carpender: First Registrar of the NJ College for Women, now Douglass Campus, Rutgers U. Photo from the Quair Class of 1924 yearbook when she was awarded an honorary degree for her service to the College. Nicholas Hall, Neilson Dormitories is named in her honor.
- Dr. Jay Oliver Lampen: Second Director of the Waksman Institute of Microbiology. Prior work with Squibb Institute for Medical Research, now a part of the Bristol Myers-Squibb corporate campus off Route 1, New Brunswick.
- Joyce Rae Blessing Paulus: Masters of Education, Assistant Director of NB Senior Resource Center.



## *Dr. Florence Elizabeth Henry Lee*

Dr. Florence E. H. Lee was born and raised in New Brunswick, graduating from Douglass, and attaining her PhD from Rutgers U. She taught in the Highland Park public schools. Dr. Lee was a leader in teacher education, with multiple publications in scholarly journals. She was a member of the American and NJ Education Associations, and the University Council on Teacher Education, among many others. Dr. Lee's charitable service was through Christ Church where she was Director of Religious Education.

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Dr. Florence Elizabeth Henry Lee



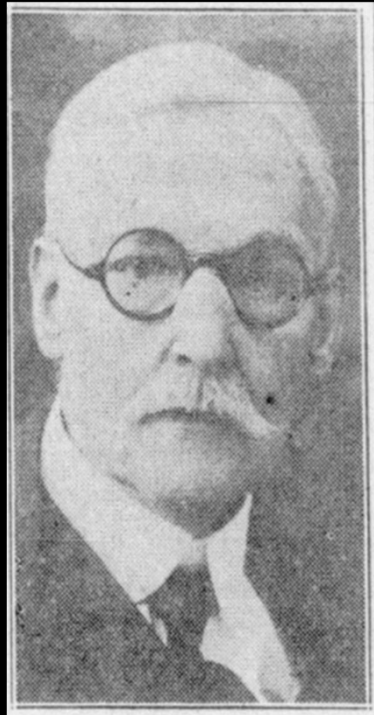
## *Service through Healthcare*

Christ Church parishioners  
have served the community by  
providing healthcare.



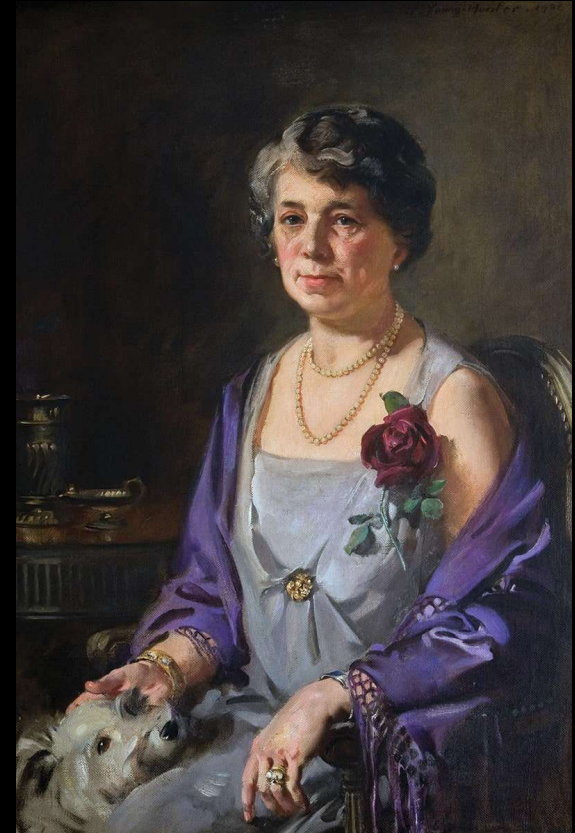
# *Service through Healthcare*

- Dr. John Warren Rice: Instrumental in building St. Peter's Hospital, served as President of Medical Staff
- Grace Tileston Wells: Donated John Wells Memorial Hospital in honor of her husband. That went through several name changes, and is now RWJUH-Barnabas.
- Johnson & Johnson: Members of the Johnson family, and dozens of workers over the years, have worshipped at Christ Church.



## *Henrietta Parker*

The Parker Memorial Home, c. 1907, on Easton Avenue at the corner of Landing Lane, New Brunswick, was established as a long-term care facility by Henrietta Parker in memory of her husband Francis. In his mid-forties he was diagnosed with an incurable neurological disorder requiring 24 hour a day care. She wanted a safe place for families to care for loved ones in similar situations.





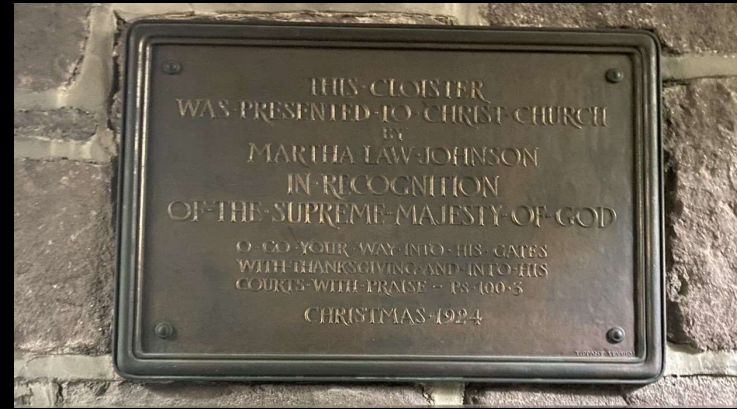
## *Service through Philanthropy*

Christ Church parishioners  
have served the community by  
performing philanthropic  
works.



# *Service through Philanthropy*

- Martha Law Johnson: Donated the Cloister, 1924.
- Joanna Bayard Neilson: "Generously and unostentatiously gave large sums to relieve the distress and suffering among the poor in NB and elsewhere." She was affiliated with the Women's Auxiliary and the Altar Society.
- May Duff Walters: Donated the Christ Church Altar in memory of her husband William J. Walters. The funding for the May Duff Walters Building on Douglass Campus was bequeathed to the School.





## *Robert Wood Johnson II*



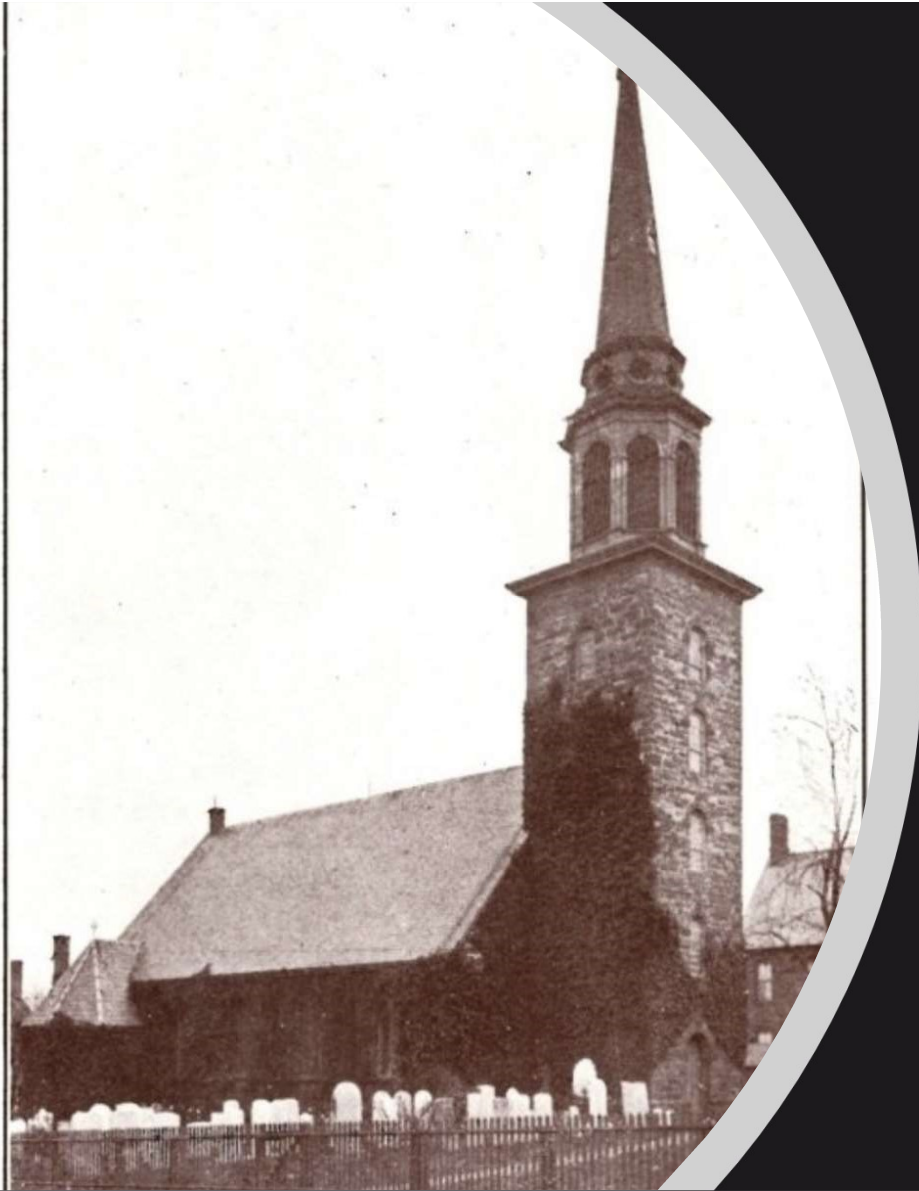
He established the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation during his lifetime. He left a bequest of 10,204,377 shares of Johnson & Johnson stock to the foundation upon his death in 1968. The value of the stock was more than US\$1 billion, making it the second-largest private foundation at the time. The foundation became a national philanthropy in 1972.

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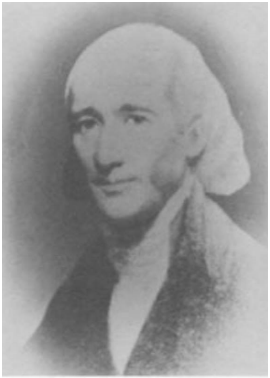
Photo Courtesy of Peter Haigeny, Robert Wood Johnson hospital

June 16, 1958, Robert Wood Johnson, Mason Gross, and Paige L'Hommedieu (l-r) attend the ceremony to lay the cornerstone for a new wing being added to Middlesex General Hospital. Within a few years, the hospital is renamed for him, and it maintains that connection today in its current name, RWJUH-Barnabas.



## *Government Service*

Christ Church parishioners  
have served the community  
through positions in  
government.



Robert Morris  
Aug. 28, 1790-May 2, 1815



## *Government Service*

- Robert Morris, Chief Justice of the NJ Supreme Court
- William H. Leupp, Mayor of New Brunswick, and also served in the NJ State Senate
- William Henry, NB Fire Department Captain, affiliated with Engine Company Number 4 and Number 5
- Thomas Miles DeRussy, Mayor of NB



Thomas Tileston Wells, 1865 - 1946

## *Thomas Tileston Wells*

- Honorary Doctorate of Literature, Rutgers U, 1912
- Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (France)
- Officier d'Académie, Ordre des Palmes académiques (France)
- Knight-Officer, Royal Order of the Redeemer (Greece)
- Grand Officer, Royal Order of St. Sava (Yugoslavia)
- Grand Officer, Order of the Crown & Grand Officer, Order of the Star (Romania)
- Officer, Order of Civil and Military Merit of Adolphe of Nassau (Luxembourg)
- Order of the Red Cross 2nd Class (Serbia)
- Grand Cross, Orthodox Order of the Holy Sepulchre
- Président Honoraire, Alliance Française of New York
- Président d'Honneur, Alliance Française de New Brunswick, NJ



## *THE CONGREGATION IS THE CHURCH*



Thank you to the 280<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee who invited me to speak today, and are exemplifying the idea of this presentation by serving the community through this event. Special thanks to Wendy Benjamin who tirelessly answered all my questions about logistics. And another really big thank you to committee member and co-presenter Artie Phills for making sure that I stayed factually accurate.

## *WEBSITES USED FOR REFERENCE WHILE PREPARING THIS PRESENTATION:*

New Brunswick Historical Society Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069805507357>

National Register Application for Christ Church on file with the National Parks Service:

<https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/f4c6235e-ae38-4odb-b6bc-d6748dcb87dd>

Find a Grave:

[www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)

Online Archives, New Brunswick Free Public Library:

<http://newbrunswick.archivalweb.com/reelSelector.php>

[www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com)

[http://www.nbfplarchive.org/nbrevitalization/files/nb\\_images/](http://www.nbfplarchive.org/nbrevitalization/files/nb_images/)

Parker Memorial Home:

<https://www.parkerlife.org/about-us/history/>

Wikipedia:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/>

Internet Archive:

<https://archive.org/>

Multiple Online Books hosted by Kenneth Lew:

<https://kenlew.com/collections/>

Rutgers University Community Repository (RUCORE):

<https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/>

Christ Church of New Brunswick:

<https://www.christchurchnewbrunswick.org/history-of-the-parish>