

\* \* \* \* \*  
 \*        In this church, he served God        \*  
 \*        In this community, he served Mankind        \*  
 \*                UPTON D. NOURSE, M.D.        \*  
 \*                Elder 1913-1947        \*  
 \*        He left many friends who wish this        \*  
 \*        memorial chancel to extend his hand        \*  
 \*        of service into the future.        \*  
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ADDRESS delivered at the

N O U R S E       M E M O R I A L  
 C H A N C E L       D E D I C A T I O N

by  
 John F. Wells, Jr.  
 Minister

THE  
 DARNESTOWN  
 PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

May 2, 1954  
 3:30 o'clock

One hundred years ago, there was no church in Darnestown, but a handful of Presbyterians worshipped in the "Free or Union Church" up at Pleasant Hills on Mr. Kelley's farm. Next year about this time, we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the reception of the first members of the Darnestown Church who organized and planned to build a church edifice on three acres of land that was donated by John Duffief. But that is too big a story to be told today. This afternoon we want to trace a bit of personal history, to trace a little bit of the relationship of people to the history of this church and community, and to do this, I find it helpful to consider the life of a young man growing up along with the community, watching always for the ways his life is intertwined with many others of this neighborhood. As we unravel these strands of personal history, we see ever afresh the remarkable truth that "we are our brothers' keeper"...that we have a real debt of gratitude that can never adequately be repaid the countless souls who have influenced our lives, even until today.

So, think with me for a few moments about a young lad born in 1839. He would be fifteen years old one hundred years ago, and even though he lived at Clarksburg, James Windsor must have known about Darnestown. One hundred years ago, however, that Jimmy Windsor would never have guessed that by the time his fifteen years had doubled to make him a man of thirty that he would have learned the grocery business over at Laytonsville and would be in business with Julian Griffith here in Darnestown. In fact, he would be establishing business in the house where Jimmy Esworthy lives today, a lad of nearly fifteen whom we can a little easier picture.



Darnestown must have been an attractive place for a young grocer to establish a business, for while James Windsor had been gaining experience, Darnestown had built a church, a private academy, and a manse that would be the residence of pastor and principal. A sizeable endowment assured there continuing to be both church and school. The community had all the marks of a successful future, so James married Sarah Darby and moved into what is now the Esworthy house, converting the front rooms into a store. When this Jimmy Windsor was thirty-two, he joined this church. The following year he was made trustee and treasurer of the church, for a good business head was hard to come by in the little rural community. Little did he realize, then, that he would serve as treasurer for fifty-four years! When he was forty-three, he took on the added responsibility of being elder, and served for fifty-two years in that capacity before he died full of years and achievements at ninety-five years of age.

We are indeed honored that two of James Windsor's daughters are still with us on our active rolls, Mrs. Haines and Mrs. Nourse being two out of our three oldest members in terms of service!

But let's uncover some other strands of history. Take a moment in time like the year 1884, seventy years ago, as a good year in which to relate to each other those we honor today. Mr. Windsor had been elder for two years, and his children, Effie and Lulu and James, Jr., and Alice, were all growing up in Darnestown along with Upton and Helen Nourse, the children of young Dr. Charles Nourse, who had just returned to Darnestown to begin his medical practice that was to last for forty years. Dr. Nourse had married Alice Darby in June 1871, the year Mr. Windsor had joined the church, and their children, Anna and Upton had been apparently named for Mrs. Nourse's parents. A stove tragedy had taken Anna Currie Nourse as a small girl, but Mrs. Nourse was destined to live on in Darnestown until 1942, dying at the ripe age of ninety-seven! And perhaps Mrs. Nourse's keen memory of



affairs in Darnestown went back further than any of those early members who survived into the twentieth century, for her father, Upton Darby, had been an elder in the church since she was a girl of fifteen back before the Civil War, and she herself had been a member since 1866. One of Mrs. Nourse's little brothers, Ernest, is another who should be drawn into the picture, but in 1884, the year I take as our base line, he still had seven years to go before he was to become an elder in the church at the age of thirty.

1884 is an interesting year in another respect, for the minister at that time was the Rev. James M. Nourse, an Ohio cousin of the Nourse's who characterized our community for so much of its history. It is significant also, to note in passing, that today in Leesburg, Virginia other relatives of the Nourse's are being remembered in a service that is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Leesburg Presbyterian Church. It was over there that Dr. Charles Nourse's father served as both pastor and teacher in the church and school that was remarkably like the arrangement we had here in Darnestown.

So we see that seventy years ago the Windsor's and Nourse's and Darby's and Griffith's and Rice's and Kelley's and Claggett's and Beall's and Gassaway's and Esworthy's and Lewis' and Tschiffely's were already populating Darnestown and setting wheels in motion that would relate them to each other and form themselves into a real community. It has been safe for me to be specific about dates and ages for those folk who were here seventy years ago, for any among them who are still with us can be rightly proud of their distinguished ancestry. I shall be less precise in dating their descendants who continue to love and serve their church and who wish to remember in these chancel furnishings those who have contributed to their own lives so richly.

I find that the date 1884 is a convenient year in which to relate everyone who is today having a



memorial left in this chancel. James Windsor, store-keeper, church and academy treasurer, elder, and father of two of our oldest living members, was forty-five that year. Humphrey Cissel, although still living at Poolesville, was thirty-six. Nellie Kelley Rice and Ernest Darby were both twenty-three. Jane Peter Beall was twenty, and young Upton Darby Nourse was a boy of eight. And, over in Nova Scotia, John Lowden was a young man of twenty-one just thinking of studying for the ministry, and out in Minnesota, Paul Merrill was a lad of sixteen. Now, seventy years later, we honor them one and all for their contributions to our church and community.

It would be grand, if there were time, to resurrect many fascinating stories that would characterize each of these fine people, but as with us who will soon be forgotten except for one or two outstanding contributions, I believe they would rest content with the same lasting tribute...that they loved this community and its church that gave them cause for loving the living Lord and serving Him in the lives of others with every talent He bestowed upon them. If we were to ask each of these remembered individuals in their maturity to select one from among themselves to be their representative to us after they were gone, I don't imagine there would be any doubt or hesitancy in their unanimous choice of Dr. Upton D. Nourse. Although he would be the youngest of their group, he was one who had personally served each of them in a way that they could not hope to repay. And he served many of you in much the same tireless way. As physician for forty-seven years in this community, he truly gave his life to his work. His father before him had set for him noble goals to strive for, and with every ounce of energy he devoted himself night and day to serving the sick of a far-flung country area. And when he "doctored you", he was minister as well as physician, for his personal faith seemed to go a long way toward healing you even before he administered any drugs. There was an air of confidence about Dr. Nourse that instilled hope and confidence in each of his patients. Often I have heard it said, "when he came through the



door, you began to feel better!"

During Dr. Upton's first seventeen years as "country doctor par excellence", his father, Dr. Charles Nourse, was finishing up his own forty years of practice in this same community. It could well be said, "like father, like son", but Dr. Upton Nourse could add to the maxim, "like father and mother, like son", for his mother, Alice Darby Nourse imparted to her son many of the qualities of kindly humor and personal concern that made his patients love him for being all they desired in a doctor plus being a choice, ever-available friend. Behind every successful man we know to look for the modest but influential woman. However, with both of these Dr. Nourse's we would go amiss if we stopped with finding but one inspirational woman. Both these men had the advantages of fine Christian mothers and wives and daughters, and they would be the first to give credit to them for any lasting achievement they effected.

Upton Nourse's career as a country doctor can hardly be well appreciated without a look at the times through which he lived and labored. At the turn of the century, when he took up practice in this area, we were still in the horse and buggy era. The roads were impassible during just the seasons of the year that usually found most sickness...but Dr. Nourse usually got through to his patients. When the roads were dusty in the summertime, it was a familiar sight to see Dr. Nourse hurrying along in either a surrey or one of the thirty-eight Dodge automobiles that carried Dr. Nourse a total of many times around the world to deliver over three thousand babies and to heal many hurts and diseases. Keep in mind that even our main road through Darnestown was not paved until 1912, and you have some idea of the two transportation eras through which Dr. Nourse performed his ministrations.

When he arrived in your home, he literally



took over. He knew where to find your medicine cabinet or any equipment he required, and it was "woe unto you" if you had not been taking his pills at the rate he had prescribed! He enjoyed the complete confidence and respect of every element of the community, and his services were available to all without regard to color of skin or any monetary considerations. His professional duty came first in his life, even before those of his own family or his own health, and his standing among his associates in the medical profession was always at the highest level.

Finally, as a churchman and Christian, he is remembered for his generosity with his time as well as with his money. He was the most frequent representative from this church to meetings of presbytery or synod, and among these higher bodies of our church, his opinions were listened to with highest regard, for his sincerity was unquestioned there even as when among his beloved friends and patients. He missed church and church meetings frequently, but never because he was lazy and didn't want to bother. He only missed when something more pressing demanded the service that only he could render.

His foresight was remarkable. As I look back over our official records I find, for instance, that in 1934, twenty years ago in the heart of the depression, "Dr. Nourse introduced the matter of better accommodations for Sunday School and suggested the possibility of, in some way, adding to our church building."

So we begin to see the place Dr. Upton Nourse filled in this community, and it seems fitting that we who benefitted from his faithful services should name our exquisite little chancel, "THE NOURSE MEMORIAL CHANCEL", for it contains the concentration of simple but dignified beauty that always characterized Dr. Nourse ...and it is placed in this church that he so dearly loved.

Our debt of gratitude will always extend back

through the dusty ages to those who have gone before and have set lights along the path that we are to follow. And as we trace our debt of gratitude back through the lives of those we can still remember, and on back through the lives of those who are little more than names in the history of one little church that has been in existence only ninety-nine years, we really begin a pilgrimage that is not complete until we say "thank you" to the whole host of Christians who have chosen the way of discipleship to our risen Lord. For all of the challenge and encouragement we receive through these very human saints, we actually acknowledge the living presence of God's Holy Spirit. And as we remember and dedicate ourselves anew to holding open the doors of our hearts to His same living presence, we take up our tasks with fresh vigor, asking only for the same tribute to come to us which has come to all those who have reached the end and have heard the words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."