

178 GEORGE, ENOCH

Publisher

Alexandria

Publisher of a funeral sermon in 1805 from the Alexandria press of Samuel Snowden (393).

George was an itinerant Methodist minister who rose to the leadership of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, succeeding the celebrated Rev. Francis Asbury (1745-1816) as one of the church's two supervising bishops in 1816. Born in Virginia, he was not attuned to religious thought until encountering the preaching of Episcopal evangelical Devereux Jarratt (1733-1801) as an adolescent; he was later brought to Methodism by John Easter (1730-91), evidently in the late 1780s. George was licensed in 1790 and assigned to extensive travels in the Carolinas and Georgia until 1799, earning an assignment as presiding elder in the Potomac District in 1800; in 1801 he was given a permanent placement in Winchester on account of his deteriorating health, where he married and finally began a family. That family apparently restricted his itinerancy in the ensuing years, with George assigned to shorter circuits in the lower valleys of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers.

In 1804, George was the presiding elder of the Georgetown District, when the presiding elder in the adjacent Baltimore District died. Rev. Wilson Lee (1764-1804) was a Methodist circuit rider in trans-Allegheny west before 1800 and had assumed this less strenuous role shortly before his death; George was called upon to conduct his funeral. He was evidently impressed by Lee's record of itinerancy, which far exceeded his own, and in territory much less friendly to the effort. He structured his sermon around Lee's self-sacrifice, apparently to the general approbation of those attending Lee's rites. George was induced to publish a summary of his extemporaneous remarks in 1805 as *The Substance of a Funeral Sermon, Delivered on the Death of the Reverend Wilson Lee*, utilizing the nearby press of Samuel Snowden. It proved to be his only publishing or authorial project.

From 1807 through 1816, George's activities became more restricted to the region between Washington and the Chesapeake. In 1816, the annual General Conference of the church elected him, along with Rev. George Roberts, to replace Bishops Asbury and McKendree as the faith's supervising elders. George took on the northern districts, Roberts the southern ones; but as the denomination grew, two more bishops were deemed necessary in 1824, allowing George to confine his duties to New England and New York. While his itinerary was reduced by the changes, his stature continued to grow. The annual conference of 1828 asked him to make a tour of the Southern conferences from whence he had come to assess their standing and promote their growth. It was on this tour that George died in Staunton, the victim of a case of dysentery contracted on his preceding stop in Harrisonburg. His body was returned to Baltimore for burial in the Mount Olivet Cemetery there, marked by official rites that rivaled other eminent ministers of the day.

Personal Data

Born: Mar. 10 1767 Lancaster County, Virginia.

Married ca. 1802 in Frederick County Virginia (wife d. 1816).

Died: Aug. 23 1828 Staunton, Virginia.

Children: Enoch Jr. (b 1808); Elisabeth; William; Wilson; possibly more sons according to Sprague's *Annals*.

Sources: Imprint (Shoemaker 8510); Sprague, *Annals* (Methodists); genealogical data from George family charts posted on Ancestry.com (October 2012).