

Paper Read at Smithfield Church, September 15, 1926  
by Willson Carpenter

This place was originally called the City. When name was given we do not know. Records show that Abraham Bockee was appointed Colonial Justice as early as 1761 when his residence was given as Nine Partners near a place called the City. In recent years name was changed to Smithfield by the Postal Authorities to prevent confusion in handling the mails. Post Office was discontinued when free rural delivery was started. Possibly Smithfield church was so called because a man by the name of Smith gave the land on which the church stands. The sexton's house formerly belonged to a man by the name of Brush. The end next the road was originally used as a store.

Some of the early records of this church were lost in 1815 when the house of Robert Willson burned. First church on this site was built in 1750, the second church in 1815, and the present church in 1847. Fortunately such capable men as Calvin Chamberlain and Barak Willson had charge of the construction of the building. The antique furniture in the church was given by Isaac Smith. Two miles south of Smithfield, at the Separate was formerly another church. P. H. Smith, pp. 117 in History of Dutchess County states that "Stephen Kenney settled near the Separate in 1740 and was one of the number who signed the covenant of the organization of

the church in the year 1787. In the course of time the society has joined with the Smithfield society.

Two miles north at the Square was the Federal Store. We have no better account of it than that by Newton Reed in his History of Amenia p. 125 "In the latter part of the last century, a company was formed in the northwest part of the town, which seems to have been for the purpose of general trade. It was called the "Federal Company" and they conducted the Federal Store. Judge Smith was at the head and there were about nine other associates. About 1803 another company was formed, including several members of the Federal Company, and, with William Davies at the head; and freighting business at Poughkeepsie was a part of their scheme. Previous to 1817, an association was incorporated, including some of the members of the former companies, and they also had their headquarters at the Federal Store. The first operation was carding wool, by horse power, but not succeeding in this, they removed to the stream near Adam's Mills, where they erected a building for the manufacture of woolen cloth, and in which they used water power for the machinery. The late Capt. Robert Willson was President of this company, and they issued a considerable amount of small bills as currency. The business of this company was not profitable, and the property was sold to Lawrence Smith, who continued the work of cloth dressing. These facts were received mostly from Capt. Samuel Hunting."

There seems to be some question as to the date on which the Rev. George Whitefield preached under the oaks at Smithfield. In a letter dated New York July 29, 1770 he mentions the fact that he preached at Sharon, Smithfield and other places. Date on tablet here is June 19, 1770 the day after he

preached in Sharon; date given on tablet in Sharon is June 18, 1770. Newton Reed in his History of Amenia gives date on which he preached at Smithfield as June 20, 1770. Although Whitefield in his letter does not mention Amenia, Newton Reed pp. 33 states that Whitefield preached at the Red Meeting House ( $\frac{1}{2}$  mile north of Amenia) if he did he probably preached there on the 19th and at Smithfield on the 20th.

As to the month in which he preached here, June or July 1770 —In Belcher's Biography of Whitefield the quotation from the letter of July 29th, 1770 reads as follows: "Since my last and during this month, I have been above a 500 miles circuit, and have been enabled to preach and travel through the heat every day. The congregations have been very large, attentive and affected particularly at Albany, Schenectady, Great Barrington, Norfolk, Salisbury, Sharon, Smithfield, Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, New Rumbart, New Windsor and Pecks Hill."

Philip H. Smith of Pawling in his General History of Dutchess County leaves out the words "and during this month".

If Whitefield's letter is correctly quoted in Belcher's Biography, Whitefield must have preached in

Sharon, Smithfield and the other places mentioned in July.

In Newton Reed's History of Amenia, In Colonial Days and Ways by Helen Evertson Smith, and in the History of Sharon by

C. F. Sedgwick, M. A., third edition, the date is given as June. When tablet was placed on Oak tree here, we assumed that the date on tablet in Sharon was correct.