

**A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
IN JAMAICA, L.I.**

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A Sketch of the History of the Presbyterian Church, in Jamaica, L.I. by James M. MacDonald

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**JAMES M. MACDONALD**

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
IN  
JAMAICA, L. I.  
BY  
JAMES M. MACDONALD,  
MINISTER OF SAID CHURCH.

Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.  
MATT. XVI. 18.

NEW-YORK:  
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1847.

TO  
AMOS DENTON,  
SENIOR ELDER  
OF THE  
CHURCH WHOSE HISTORY IS HERE SKETCHED,  
AND WHO,  
FOR NEARLY THIRTY YEARS, HAS BEEN AN UNIVERSALLY RESPECTED  
MEMBER OF ITS SESSION,  
THIS VOLUME  
IS INSCRIBED,  
AS A SLIGHT TESTIMONIAL OF ESTEEM,  
BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND,  
THE COMPILER.



## PREFACE.

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IN the following pages the compiler has aimed at the greatest accuracy. He has also studied to be as brief as any thing like a satisfactory view of events, extending through more than one hundred and eighty years, would allow.

He acknowledges himself indebted to the sketches left by Mr. Faitoute and Mr. Crane, and to manuscripts amounting to more than one hundred pages, relating principally to the early history of this church, kindly put into his hands by an antiquarian friend.

He has been much assisted by the full and impartial outline of ecclesiastical affairs, in Thompson's History of Long Island, a book for which the author deserves well of the citizens of his native island. But his special acknowledgments are due to Henry Onderdonk, Jr., Principal of Union Hall Academy, and author of Revolutionary Incidents, who, in his extensive re-



searches, has taken the trouble to note whatever might throw light on the history of this church, for the use of the compiler, or has directed him to sources of valuable information.

PARSONAGE-HOUSE, }  
*Jamaica, Sept. 20, 1847.* }

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE first inhabitants came to Jamaica, during the administration of Peter Stuyvesant. The English, however, laying claim to the same territory, it was surrendered to them, by the Dutch, in the year of our Lord 1664.

After the Revolution in England, in 1688, a great change took place in the Colonial government. A General Assembly was allowed, which consisted of deputies, chosen by the freeholders of each County, to whom, together with the Governor and the Council, the legislative power was intrusted.

In 1692, Col. Fletcher arrived, with a commission to be Governor of the Colony. He very soon manifested great zeal to form a "religious establishment;" and, whilst the government was in his hands, a new policy was adopted, in respect to ecclesiastical affairs, which, at length, produced much dissension, and operated with disastrous effect on the Presbyterian churches, in Hempstead and Jamaica. The recommendation of the Governor was for "the settling of an able ministry," but no intimation was given that the Episcopal denomination was to be exclusively supported by law. The majority of the Assembly were

entirely disinclined to the scheme; but, as the model of the Church of Holland had been secured to them by one of the articles of surrender, it is not probable that they suspected Fletcher of his design to introduce uniformity of religion, or to have the Episcopal denomination exclusively supported by law. The Governor warmly rebuked them, asserting that the same law which secured to them the privileges of Englishmen did "provide for the religion of the Church of England." Fletcher was a bigot to the Episcopal form of church government.\*

In Sept. 1693, a new Assembly met. The determination of the Governor at length induced the house to yield; and a bill was "brought in for settling the ministry, and raising a maintenance for them in the City and County of New-York, Counties of Richmond and Westchester and Queen's County." The bill was drawn by James Grahame, Esq., the Speaker of the Assembly, who was the only member of that body who belonged to the Church of England. As the inhabitants of Jamaica were, at that time, engaged in erecting a new house of worship, and had applied to the Assembly for an Act to enable them to raise money for completing the work, Col. Fletcher and Grahame, perceiving the Assembly inclined to pass such an Act, thought it a favorable opportunity, to press their favorite measure for a religious establishment, and accordingly brought in the bill aforesaid. It was artfully framed, and prescribed a method of induction that "would not do well for the Dissenters, and but lamely for the Church, tho' twould do with the help of the

\* Smith, I. p. 128.