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HOW THEY ENTERED CANAAN  
(A Collection of Holiness Experience Accounts)  
Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

Vol. I -- Named Accounts

### **RICHARD & MRS. BASSETT (Early American Methodists)**

Richard Bassett was well known as a distinguished person, not only in the state of Delaware, but in the United States. At different times he filled high and honorable stations. He was a lawyer of note, a legislator, judge, and a governor of Delaware. He was also a member of the convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, a senator in the first Congress, and a judge of the United States Court for the circuit comprising the Districts of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

In spite of his respected and influential positions, and their wealth, Richard Bassett and his wife became humbled followers of Christ -- Methodist Christians, and zealous advocates of scriptural holiness. Their wealth did not exempt them from the requirements of the Methodist discipline. In reference to some of the wealthy and influential families in Methodism, including the Bassetts, one wrote: "These wealthy families conformed to Methodist rule and discipline as strictly as the poor ..." With the lowly, "they wealthy mingled in worship."

On Bohemian manor, where Richard Bassett owned 6,000 acres, old-time Methodist campmeetings were conducted. In 1802, Richard Bassett wrote:

"Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. I conceive I am within bounds when I say the congregations this day, had they been numbered, were seven thousand souls. I say congregations, for such was the multitude, it was found necessary to have three preachers engaged at the same time, the congregations at a proper distance from each other; and this was not enough, a fourth congregation might have been found.

"Surely the scene was awful; a time to be remembered, and a day of great solemnity. The power of God was great among saints and sinners. We had also a glorious day and night both in the house of God, and my own house; several were powerfully awakened, at private houses, in times of singing and prayer. On Monday sinners began to be greatly alarmed and powerfully agitated in mind. On Tuesday, after preaching, the sacrament was administered. This was the most gracious, solemn, and rejoicing time I ever saw. I conclude there were not less than between twelve and

fifteen hundred who came to the Lord's table, white and colored people. In this exercise many sinners were cut to the heart, and powerful convictions took place, most of which I believe ended in sound conversions, and many backsliders were reclaimed.

"O the astonishing goodness of the all-wonder-working God! I presume there were not less than from twenty to thirty souls converted or sanctified in my own house during the meeting. Blessed be God for it. I know you will say in your heart, Amen. The two last days our meeting was the best, and so it was at the last yearly meeting. Our blessed God, in both stances, kept the best wine to the last. We continued till three o'clock on Friday morning. It gave me some grief that we did not hold out longer, because I saw such an uncommon thirst in the hearts of the people of God. There must have been some hundreds awakened."

Regarding Mrs. Bassett, Freeborn Garrettson wrote: "Sister Bassett ... is one of the happiest women I have met with a living witness of sanctification, whose soul seems to be continually wrapped in a flame of love."

Stevens wrote: "Richard Bassett, of Dover, Delaware, was, as we have seen, a man of pre-eminence in the civil and social life of these times ... He 'lived a bright example of holiness, and left the world praising God.' He often preached, and was the chief founder of "Wesley Chapel," in Dover. They had three residences, one in Dover, one in Wilmington, and another at Bohemia Manor, a famous locality in the early Methodist annals, where Ann Bassett delighted to minister to the way-worn itinerants. All of them were favorite homes of the ministry, and scenes of early Quarterly Conferences and other extraordinary meetings."

Taken From: Stevens M. E. History, Vol. 4 -- hdm0244.tex

"In Philadelphia, it is said, there is a very great revival of religion, and near one hundred have been added to the society in two weeks." Senator Bassett wrote to Asbury from Dover, Del., in 1801: "Glory to God, he has done wonders! About one hundred and thirteen, white and black, were joined in society yesterday, and, from what I hear, I doubt not but as many, if not twice the number, who went away wounded and crippled, sick and sore, will be joined in different parts of the country; all the fruits of this blessed meeting."

Bassett was practically a lay evangelist among his neighbors. He held at Dover a sort of annual protracted meeting, with daily preaching and prayer-meetings at sunrise, for a whole week. "O the wonders of redeeming love!" he writes in 1802; "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. I conceive I am within bounds when I say the congregations this day, had they been numbered, were seven thousand souls. I say congregations, for such was the multitude, it was found necessary to have three preachers engaged at the same time, the congregations at a proper distance from each other; and this was not enough, a fourth congregation might have been found. Surely the scene was awful; a time to be remembered, and a day of great solemnity. The power of God was great among saints and sinners. We had also a glorious day and night both in the house of God, and my own house; several were powerfully awakened, at private houses, in times of singing and prayer. On Monday sinners began to be greatly alarmed and powerfully agitated in mind. On Tuesday, after preaching, the sacrament was administered. This was the most gracious, solemn, and rejoicing time I ever saw. I conclude there were not less than between twelve and fifteen

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To learn more about these wealthy, and yet humble holiness advocates, you are invited to read and study hdm0612, "Richard Bassett, Constitution Frammer and Holiness Advocate," found in the HDM CD Menu under the listings of Maxey-DV.

Source: "Richard Bassett, Constitution Frammer and Holiness Advocate" Compiled by Duane V. Maxey

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