

SAMUEL COLE.

SAMUEL COLE and his wife Elizabeth emigrated from Cole's Hill, Hertfordshire, England, and landed on the Jersey shore above Philadelphia. His name does not appear among those given by Smith or Gordon in their histories of the first settlements of New Jersey; the reason for which may be that he came as a servant with but little estate.

He was a haberdasher and hatter, and, in all probability, plied his calling after his arrival here.¹ He came among the first of the emigrants, and made judicious selection of his land whereon to seat himself, but, for some reason, soon after he had erected a dwelling, he sold his first location and removed further into the country. The return of this survey bears date 3d month, 13th, A. D. 1682. It includes five hundred acres of land on the north side of the mouth of Cooper's creek and fronting on the river.² William Cooper, who emigrated from the same place, had settled on the opposite side of the stream in the midst of an Indian village, and "over against" the Indian town of Shackomaxin, so that Samuel Cole's plantation was not far from other habitations of man, although in the midst of the primeval forest. Being a neighbor to William Cooper at Cole's Hill, he again finds himself near by; from this it may be inferred that he was governed in his choice by the

¹ Lib. G₂, 33.

² Revel's Book, 63.

advice and direction of his former associate and friend. A few settlements were made near him, bounding upon the creek and laying higher up the stream, that water course at that time being the only highway upon which the people traveled to and from the city of Philadelphia.

He was, perhaps, one of the creditors of Edward Byllynge, as, in 1676, William Penn and the other trustees conveyed to him and Benjamin Bartlet one-ninetieth part of a share of propriety; under which he claimed the title to the land by him taken up.³ Although this was a small portion, yet it placed him upon an equal footing with the largest holders as touching the political affairs of the colony; under this right he was afterwards called to fill several important offices.

Samuel Cole cleared a few acres and built a house on the land which he had located, but soon after sold the buildings and one hundred acres of his survey to Henry Wood, who occupied the same.⁴ In 1687, he sold the balance of the survey to Samuel Spicer, as well as a quantity of rights, which Spicer soon appropriated.⁵ He had other lands at the same place, which were disposed of to settlers thereabout.

Upon the sale of his dwelling and part of his estate on the Delaware to Henry Wood, he removed to a place called Penisaikin and purchased five hundred acres of Jeremiah Richards (1685), who had previously erected buildings thereon and cleared some land.⁷ This was near the settlement of William Matlack, Timothy Hancock and others, but on the south side of the creek that now bears that name. The rights under which Richards had made his survey, he purchased of Henry Stacy, who had emigrated to New Jersey, but soon returned to England, where he deceased. Like most of the settlers, he had not been long the owner, before he gave his place the name of "New Orchard," which name was remembered for many years, but has long since been lost sight of. This plantation was near the head of the south branch of the stream before named, but has years ago lost its identity by the division and sub-division, sale and transfer, incident to real estate in New Jersey. Several other adjoin-

³ Lib. A, 4.

⁴ Lib. G₂, 33.

⁵ Lib. B, 66.

⁶ Lib. G, 111.

⁷ Lib. B, 75.

ing surveys were made by him, and, at his death, he was the owner of more than one thousand acres of land, then in unbroken forest, but now many valuable farms.⁸ The direct and collateral branches of this family are still owners of much of this land.

Samuel Cole had much to do in the political troubles of the province; among which was the settlement of the boundary line between the counties of Burlington and Gloucester, and in which he was personally interested, as his land lay on the stream of water and on both sides of the highway where the trouble existed. He was a member of the Legislature in the years 1683 and 1685, in which last year commissioners were appointed to fix the line, who settled it to be from the forks of Penisaukin, up the south branch to the Salem road; then along the road to the north branch of the same creek; thence to the head thereof; and thence upon a southeast course to the utmost boundary.⁹ With this boundary the people about Penisaukin were dissatisfied, and, in 1693, the act was set aside, and the present line was agreed upon about the year 1700.

A few years after Samuel Cole had settled at New Orchard, he returned to England to arrange some unsettled business; in coming back to New Jersey, the vessel touched at the island of Barbadoes, where he was taken sick and died. At this place there was a large settlement of Friends, many of whom had been banished from England during the religious troubles, and many others of whom had gone into voluntary exile, to join their connections and to be free from intolerance and bigotry.

Samuel and Elizabeth Cole had but two children,—Samuel, who married Mary, a daughter of Thomas Kendall; and Sarah, who married James Wild.

Thomas Kendall, above named, came to New Jersey as one of the servants of Daniel Wills. Being a bricklayer, he was a useful man in the province. He built the first corn mill in Gloucester county, in 1697 (now Evans's, near Haddonfield), and became the owner of considerable real estate. As Samuel Cole died intestate, and his widow was appointed administratrix

⁸ Basse's Book, 29.

⁹ Leaming & Spicer's Laws.

ninth month, 23d, 1693, the whole of his real estate descended to his son Samuel, who occupied the same until his death in 1728.¹⁰ He was a man of some political aspirations, having been appointed sheriff in 1710, in 1713 and in 1724. He left a will,¹¹ and the following named children: Samuel, who married Mary Lippincott; Joseph, who married Mary Wood; Thomas, who married Hannah Stokes; Kendall, who married Ann Budd; Elizabeth, who married Jacob Burcham and Benjamin Cooper; Mary, who married Edward Tonkins; Susanna, who married William Budd; and Rachel, who married Enoch Roberts.

In 1739, the devisees of the second Samuel Cole re-surveyed the original estate, which shows how their ancestors held it. The old house, as erected by the first Samuel Cole, is shown on the map, and is now (1877) standing, but it has been long since abandoned as a dwelling. It is built of logs, is one story high, has two windows and one door. It stands in the door yard of the farm, formerly Joseph H. Cole's, deceased. It is used for various purposes and is fast going to decay. Another generation, and it will be forgotten.

James Wild was a wheelwright, and settled on the north side of the south branch of Penisaukin creek, on five acres of land, which he purchased of John Cowperthwaite in 1712, and at but a short distance from the residence of his father-in-law. He died in 1731, leaving a will.¹² His children were James, Samuel, John, Sarah (who married Jonathan Thomas), Jonathan, Elizabeth, and Rachel. His widow Rachel, who was a second wife, survived him. In his will he speaks of Alexander Morgan as his brother-in-law, but how such relation existed, cannot at this writing be discovered. Four years after, his widow Rachel died, intestate, but leaving some considerable estate. Of this family nothing is known at the present day, as none of the name have lived in this region for many years; and the above defective sketch is only here introduced, that something may be gathered therefrom of interest to such as search with better facilities and greater success.

¹⁰ Gloucester Files, 1683.

¹¹ Lib. No. 3, 02.

¹² Lib. No. 3, 450.

Within the bounds of the land of which Samuel Cole died, seized, on the west side of the King's road from Salem to Burlington, and about one-half mile south of Penisaukin creek, stands St. Mary's church, better known, however, as "the old Cole's Town Church," having been always under the control of the Protestant Episcopal denomination of New Jersey. The history of this church dates back into the beginning of the eighteenth century, and, in all probability, had its origination in the Keithean controversy, which separated many Quaker families from the religious doctrines as laid down by George Fox, and, as a consequence, drew them around the dissenter whose talent and eloquence made the tenets of his new belief attractive and acceptable wherever he preached.

After his separation from Friends, brought about by controversy upon doctrinal points and church discipline, both in America and before the yearly meetings of London, he came again to the colonies under the patronage of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," established in London by a few members of the church of England. He traveled through most of the towns and villages from Massachusetts to South Carolina, seeking for his proselytes among the members of the society from which he had been expelled, and established churches in many places where sufficient numbers of his followers lived in the same neighborhood. In his journal, which was published before his death, he says: "September 15th, 1703, I preached at the house of William Heulings in West Jersey," which was but a short distance from where the old church stands, and this may be safely accepted as the beginning of St. Mary's church at Colestown. Although not all the requirements of a religious organization were complied with at once, yet the interest then and there commenced was never lost sight of or abandoned, simply for want of numbers; and the intervals of religious service at the dwelling houses of such adherents as resided thereabout, were never so widely separated as to destroy the connection of George Keith's preaching in 1703 with the ultimate success and establishment of the church.

The first building was erected about the year 1752, and was repaired in 1825, without any change as to the interior arrangement. In subsequent years, and after the same religious denomination had erected churches at Camden, Moorestown and Haddonfield, the old house was suffered to fall into decay, and well nigh tumbled to the ground; but a few of the descendants of the old families that worshiped there, with commendable liberality and good taste, in 1866 again repaired the old house, faithfully preserving its ancient form and antiquated appearance.

In further connection with this matter, John Rudderow, who emigrated from England about the year 1680, and who lived in Chester township, Burlington county, N. J., between the north and south branches of Penisaukin creek, and died in 1729, inserted the following clause in his will: "I give ten pounds towards the building of a church in that place to be convenient hereaway."¹³ This man, who settled at the place in which he deceased, was an Episcopalian, and was, no doubt, a participant in the religious quarrel of which George Keith was the leader; around him most of the few families in that region collected, and formed the body of the church. His education (he having graduated as a lawyer in England), and influence in the neighborhood as an upright and conscientious man, would make him, next after Keith, the principal person in such an enterprise, and the devise made in his will shows clearly what was in contemplation even at that early day, and how desirous he was that such an enterprise should be carried out.

After the lapse of a few years, another incident occurred, that establishes an additional link in the history of this church, and that may be held quite as reliable as the devise of John Rudderow, before named; and is, in fact, the connecting link that unites beyond controversy its earlier and latter days. To the perseverance and care of Asa Matlack is due what is recorded of the sayings of Abigail Rudderow (widow of William, who was a grandson of the first John,) touching this matter. This lady was a daughter of Thomas and Rebecca Spicer, and of remarkable intelligence and memory. She was born in 1742, and lived

¹³ Lib. No. 3, 308.

to the age of eighty-three. She always resided in the neighborhood, and, doubtless, was conversant with every matter of moment which occurred in that section of the country. She was married when she was about sixteen years of age, and lived to see her descendants multiplied in more than ordinary proportion, and scattered through the various States of the Union. Relative to the traditions in question, her own version of it is more interesting than any other:

“At nine years of age I was baptised at the church by Dr. Jenny, which at that time was being built, the roof being on and the weather-boarding up as high as the window sills. The ground had been previously consecrated by Dr. Jenny from Philadelphia.”

This gentleman, the Rev. Robert Jenney, A. M., came to New York as chaplain in the royal army stationed in that city. In 1722, he was chosen rector of the church at Rye, in West Chester county, New York, but only remained there four years. He removed to Hempstead on Long Island, and afterwards to Philadelphia as rector of Christ church. He died in 1762, aged seventy-five years.¹⁴

This baptism, which occurred in 1751, and was so likely to be remembered by Abigail Spicer, fixes the erection of the church beyond a question. Its subsequent history from that time to 1825, the year of her decease, was familiar to her; and how great the regret that some person had not saved it from loss! Being placed upon social equality with the clergy who officiated there, her knowledge of their coming, time of service and removal, was reliable, and would have made the reminiscences of the old chapel of deep interest to such as emulate their forefathers in worshipping around its altar.

The births, baptisms, marriages and burials, were incidents that would naturally attract more or less attention in a rural district; and, with a person whose religious feeling was centred in that spot, they would be indelibly marked upon the memory. Although many years have intervened between the incidents connected with this ancient church, yet they are so linked

¹⁴ *History of Rye*, 312.

together, and relate so plainly to the same object, that its history can be traced through the times of its usefulness without uncertainty or doubt; just as among the land marks of a long neglected pathway that time and circumstances have, in the lapse of years, well nigh destroyed, enough is sometimes left to trace its direction and discover its place. Events are evanescent, passing from the memory, never, perhaps, to be re-called, and, but for the care of some, to make a record thereof, would in a few decades be forgotten.

The high, boxed pulpit, the small, narrow chancel, the dark, ill arranged galleries, and the badly shaped, uncushioned benches, leave no doubt that this structure was erected long before comfort was regarded, or convenience studied. The outside appearance is plain and unpretending; without steeple or belfrey, stained windows or arched roof, it stands, the evidence of simplicity in the taste of our forefathers, and of the little means which they had to expend in such an edifice.

Around the building, and in the small burial ground originally attached, lay the remains of those who worshiped within its walls from time to time, and who, in the fulness of their days, passed to the same account as those before them, strengthening the links of fraternal regard that have connected generation with generation unto the present day.

Of the ministers who have supplied this church at various periods, there is no continuous record. All, however, have acted in the capacity of missionaries, the church standing in a thinly settled neighborhood, and being several miles from any town. William Sturgeon (the assistant of Dr. Jenny, who was then rector of Christ church, Philadelphia,) visited the people once in each month while the house was in progress of building. Nathaniel Evans, a young man of finished education and great talent, had charge also of St. Mary's and the church at Gloucester, and resided with his parents at Haddonfield. He was admitted to holy orders by Dr. Terrick of London, and came immediately to New Jersey in discharge of his duties. He was a man of much literary taste, and a volume of his poems was published after his death, a copy of which may be found in the Franklin Library of Philadelphia. He followed Mr. Sturgeon

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and took charge of the church when finished, and there he preached for six years. He died October 29th, 1767, at the age of twenty-five, and was buried at Christ church, Philadelphia. An interval of five years now occurred, when Robert Blackwell was selected, November 19th, 1772. He married Rebecca, a daughter of Joseph Harrison, and resided in Haddonfield. During the Revolutionary war, he became a chaplain in the army, and the church was again left without regular service.

Henry Miller, president of the college of Philadelphia, was his successor, and he was soon followed by the Reverend John Wade. He died in 1799. His remains were interred in front of the main entrance to the church, the stone that marks his grave at this day being buried beneath the soil.

Samuel Sprague, who lived in Mount Holly, and ministered in spiritual things to the people of that region of country, occasionally preached here. Andrew Fowler, next followed; in the quaint language of the recorder, "he had a wife and three children and three churches under his charge." When he was there, or how long he remained, is not known. After him came Levi Heath, of Burlington, and then Samuel Pussey, who was the cause of much trouble in the church. He was an impostor, having produced the ordination papers and their accompanying documents of a clergyman who died on the passage over with him. With these testimonials he was accepted as a minister, and so continued until the truth was discovered. In succession came Daniel Higbee in 1807, and, after him, Richard Hall.

The last named person preached there in the year 1811. Since that time, various vicissitudes have befallen the old chapel. As before stated, these facts were gathered by Asa Matlack from Abigail Rudderow, and may be relied upon as correct.

The oldest legible stone now standing in the yard is that of Philip Wallace, who was there buried in 1746, aged eighty-two years; and dated in the same year is that of Mary Wallace, his wife, aged eighty.

These were among the first English settlers about the mouth of the Penisaukin creek, and were Friends until the schism caused by George Keith, when they became his followers and

were identified with the church of England. The name is sometimes differently spelled, but the family is the same.

In 1760, Humphrey Day and Jane, his wife, were buried here, the first being seventy-five, and the latter, sixty-five years of age. They lived on the north side of Cooper's creek, owning part of the estate lately held by the Shivers family. He was, perhaps, a son of Steeven Deay (as he spelled it), who was a resident of Chester township, Burlington county, in 1696.

Elias Toy was here interred in 1762, aged forty-seven years. His residence was in the last named county near the river shore, where part of his land still remains in the name. He was a descendant of one of the Swedish families who settled on the shores of the Delaware long before the English came, and whose ancestors worshiped at Tinakum and Wicaco, much after the faith and forms of the Protestant Episcopal church of the present day.

Many of the rude, rough monuments erected there to point to the resting place of friends and families have yielded to time and exposure, showing at this date only parts of letters and figures, from which nothing definite can be deciphered.

If a descendant of "Old Mortality" had chanced here a hundred years ago, wandering through the country, clad in hoddens gray, with black cloth leggins and strong clouted shoes, riding upon a white pony around whose neck there hung a canvass pouch containing his tools, following the bent of his ancestor with the same sincere devotion, he would have found here abundant room to gratify his strange, but commendable vocation.

Here, day after day, could have been seen his faithful beast, tethered among the graves, to seek, as best he could, a precarious living, while his master sat upon the defaced tombstones, striving, with chisel and hammer, to restore the almost worn-out names and dates to their original freshness. Refusing any reward, save the bare entertainment of himself and beast, his acts would have been held in grateful remembrance by those who, but for him, might have sought in vain for relatives or friends in this long neglected spot. Considering it a religious duty and upon himself incumbent, nothing would

have hindered him except his answers to the words of some observer curious to know his object, and then, only to clear his glasses and arrange his tools, the better to prosecute the work before him. The task completed, and his pony saddled for his departure, he, perchance, would have repeated the memorable language of his predecessor in view of the kind offices extended to him. "The blessing of our Master be with you. My hours are like the ears of the latter harvest, but your days are in the spring; yet you may be gathered into the garner of mortality before me, for the sickle of death cuts down the green as oft as the ripe; and there is a colour in your cheek that, like the bud of the rose, serveth oft to hide the worm of corruption. Wherefore labour as one who knoweth not when his master calleth. And, if it be my lot to return to this spot after ye are gone home to your own place, these old withered hands will frame a stone of memorial that your name may not perish from among the people."

Other associations than these are, however, around this place. Along the King's road, which passed close to the door, traveled all those going north or south to various parts of the province, when our State was in its infancy, and the dwellings of the settlers were separated by miles of forest; while here stood the church in a lonely spot, like an oasis in the wilderness, inviting the travelers to rest under the shade of the broad topped oaks that grew near. If it were an ancient burial place of the Indians, none of the tribes but would pause, in going to their hunting grounds, to show their reverence for the graves of their fathers.

Along this highway moved the contending armies during the Revolutionary war, and, no doubt, the doors of the church were open alike to friend or foe. Here, under the protection of the standard of St. George, listened British officers to the preaching of their chaplains, resting on their way to carnage and death, to hear the persuasive eloquence of the teachers of religion. Here, likewise, may the immortal Washington have laid aside his sword, and, kneeling at the little chancel, have partaken of the Holy Communion, after the rector had preached "peace on earth and good will to men." Here, the

representatives of the King acknowledged the same religious creed that the early teachings of a mother had left upon the then impressible memory of the great commander.

In this connection, it is gratifying to know that this relic of olden times has been preserved to the present generation, through the liberality of those who regard the days of their ancestors and hold fast to antiquated things. Would that more were like them.

Elizabeth, the widow of the first Samuel Cole, married Griffith Morgan, who was a mariner, and resided in Philadelphia. The license of marriage was granted by the chancellor of Pennsylvania, and bears date December 10th, 1693. In 1697, he purchased a tract of land of William Frampton, situated in Gloucester county near the mouth of Penisaukin creek, whereon he settled, and remained until his decease. He also owned other land in Gloucester county, as, in 1677, he purchased real estate of David Lloyd and Isaac Norris. The issue of this marriage was one son,—Alexander, who married Hannah, the daughter of Joseph and Lydia Cooper, and grand-daughter of William the first settler. Alexander remained on the homestead estate, which, before his death, became valuable. The children of Alexander and Hannah Morgan were Joseph, who married Agnes Evans; Benjamin, who married Jane Roberts; Isaac; Mary, who married Edmund Hellingshead; Elizabeth, who married William Miller; Lydia, who married Nathan Beeks; and Sarah, who married Josiah Burrough. Both the Coles and the Morgans that came from the same maternal ancestors are, at this time, connected with the most respectable families in the country, and have spread through all the United States.