

WILLIAM COOPER.

WILLIAM COOPER and his wife Margaret, before their emigration to New Jersey, lived at Coleshill, in the parish of Amersham, Hertfordshire, England. This town lies about twenty-six miles northwest of the city of London, in which he was born in 1632. After he attained his majority, his occupation was that of a blacksmith. They were Friends and members of the Upperside Monthly Meeting, in whose minutes the records of the births of their children may be found, which are as follows :

William was born ninth month, 26th, A. D. 1660;

Hannah was born ninth month, 2 ist, A. D. 1662;

Joseph was born seventh month, 22d, A. D. 1666;

James was born third month, Toth, A. D. 1670;

Daniel was born first month, 27th, A. D. 1673.

James probably died young, as no mention of his name appears in any papers relating to the family ; the others came over with their parents, and afterwards were the ancestors. of the family in these parts.

Like others of the same religious persuasion, William Cooper suffered, both in estate and person, from those who considered that they were doing God's service, in molesting such *as* chose to differ from them in opinion and practice,—despoiling him of his horses and cattle, and dragging him to prison from the place **where he** was - attending religious service.

Samuel Smith, in his history of New Jersey, does not fix the time of the arrival of this person with his family ; which was probably not for a year after the first emigrants had come to Burlington. Neither is the name of the vessel given, the place of landing nor the names of those who came with him. Among persons tracing their family from the one continent to the other, this break in their history is always a regret ; it is an omission that Samuel Smith might, perhaps, have filled, but, at that period, he did not attach much importance thereto. The time has passed, however, to remedy this defea, except in a few cases, a defe& which always leaves a shade of doubt as to identity, and, sometimes, a breach that nearly destroys it. In this particular case no question exists, since the documents of a religious and legal charmer follow each other so closely and so continuously, that the William Cooper of Coleshill, of 1660, was the William Cooper of Fyne point, in 1682, beyond a doubt.

The first is the certificate of the Monthly Meeting at Coleshill, **which** is as follows:

" WHEREAS, William Cooper, of Coleshill, in the parish of Amersham, and the county of Hertford, hath signified unto us that he hath an intention, if the Lord permit, to transport himself with his wife and children unto the plantation of West New Jersey, and bath desired a testimonial from this meeting for the satisfaction of Friends there or elsewhere, unto whom he may be outwardly unknown ;

"We, therefore, whose names are here underwritten, do hereby certify all whom it may concern, that the said William Cooper and Margaret, his wife, having lived in these parts for many years, ever since the first of their conviction, have walked **conscienciously and honestly among** us, agreeably to the profession and testimony of truth, according to the best of our observation and knowledge of them.

"In witness whereof, we have hereunto set our hands, this, **the fifth day of the twelfth month, 078.**"

This fixes his nativity (the previous record showing the names and ages of his children), and also proves that he

contemplated coming to "the plantation of West New Jersey." He could not have arrived here before the middle of the year following, the twelfth month being February, and not a proper season for ships to start upon long voyages. He could not, therefore, have come with the first adventurers.

The next ad of William Cooper, as the records show, was one for the purpose of locating lands in New Jersey; this, doubtless, occurred soon after his arrival here, and bears the date of October 5th, A. D., 1680.¹

At that date, he selected fifty acres within the town bounds of Burlington, and had the same surveyed and returned to himself. It is possible that there was some delay in having the bounds defined, and in putting them on record.

There can be but little doubt, however, that on this piece of land he erected his first house and made a home for his family. The troubles between the London and Yorkshire commissioners in regard to the parts of the territory each were to take, hindered the fixing of the boundaries of individual settlers, and may account for the difference in the known arrival of some and the return of their surveys; yet, in the case of William Cooper, the fact that the time of his arrival was not exactly known, leaves the taking up of his first location and his coming still an open question.

In a short time it was found that the lines of the fifty acres interfered with those of an adjoining tract, owned by the "widow" Perkins; this trouble was afterwards settled by John Woolstan, unto whose wife William Cooper conveyed the same in 1695,² she being his only daughter. Whether he continued his business after his settlement here, and attended to the necessary wants of the inhabitants, which, in his particular line, were important, there is no record, for the worker in iron of that day was skilled in many other branches of mechanism, now in no way connected therewith.

He probably had knowledge of the coining of the settlers at Newton, some perhaps being known to him in the mother country, as they had secured the title to their land but fifteen

¹ Revel's Book, 7.
² Lib. Ba, Soo.

months before he accomplished the same for his property at Pyne Point, to which place he soon removed from Burlington. The intimacy so soon established between them warrants this conclusion; so do many other incidents scattered through the history of the times, showing that the intercourse here was but a continuation of that begun before this adventure was undertaken. The survey of three hundred acres at Pyne Point bears the date of June 12th, 1682.³ Within its bounds was a large Indian settlement, and in this William Cooper with his family made his abode. The position was well taken, being one of the most commanding in this section of the country, and a good location for a town. The point of land made by the junction of the creek (afterwards called by his name) with the Delaware river, was selected as the site for his house, this site now being under water by the encroachment of the river upon the shore.

Before William Cooper selected this land, however, William Roydon had made a survey lower down the river, with which the boundaries of William Cooper's tract was found to interfere. It is evident that much controversy grew out of this trouble, and that it was not settled during the life of William Cooper. In 1723, William Cooper, the son of Daniel and grandson of William, became the owner of much the larger part of Roydon's survey; and, being seized of his father's adjoining real estate at the same time, this difficulty may be said to have ended there.

William Roydon located other tracts of land in New Jersey, and crossed the ocean several times between the arrival of the commissioners at Burlington and his death. In his will he styles himself "citizen and grocer of London," in which city he died during the year named.

If tradition be correct, he was a shrewd business man, and did not always heed the precepts laid down by Friends, when his own interest was involved. Although he speaks in his will of William Cooper as '**this trusty friend,**' yet the trouble about the bounds of their adjoining land did not make the same

³ Revel's Book, 32,

⁴ Lib, D, 456.

impression upon the mind of William Cooper. Nearly one hundred years after his death a copy of his will was brought to Philadelphia and recorded in the proper office, being a necessary link to the title to some of his real estate in America. His family, if he had any, did not settle here. He had a brother Robert and a sister, Esther Wright, both of Essex, and a sister Eve, wife of Richard Crews of London.

The Indians were not molested, and, although Arasapha, their king, conveyed to William Cooper all the estate that they had within the bounds of his location, yet no claim was set up by the grantee, and no trouble appears to have taken place between the old and the new inhabitants. The consideration in the deed between the aborigines and the settlers was made up of rum, match-coats, beads, guns, pots, kettles, pans, and such articles of general utility and fancy as satisfied this simple-minded people and always prevented any trouble in the future. This town was opposite a similar Indian settlement on the river called Shackomaxin; between these places a ferry was already established, as to the beginning of which "the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." Here the adventurers under the patronage of William Penn landed, and set up the first Friends' meeting in his colony. In the third month, 1681, a meeting was fixed at the house of Thomas Fairman; and it was thus kept for more than a year, until the Friends united with those in Philadelphia.

It is interesting to observe the religious intercourse that was maintained between the Quakers on each side of the river, an intercourse which led to many marriages among the younger members, and to some complicity in tracing the genealogies of such.

In 1682, a six-weeks' meeting of business was held alternately between Shackomaxin and Pyne Point, which was maintained for several months; the said meetings being held at the house of Thomas Fairman of the one place and at that of William Cooper of the other. This custom appears to have been established by the yearly meeting held at Salem, for the convenience of Friends; but it did not long continue, for a place of worship was soon built at Philadelphia, and also one at Newton, thus avoiding

the necessity of using private dwellings. The meeting at Mark Newbie's house, to which William Cooper of the Point resorted, had been kept before he removed from Burlington, showing where the principles of George Fox were first promulgated in this section, and making it a point of interest to such as care to inquire thereinto.

The intercourse of William Cooper with William Penn and the other trustees of Edward Byllynge was frequent, by reason of the large amount of land which he purchased for himself, and also as agent for others, still residents of England or Ireland. He was present at the celebrated treaty of Penn with the Indians, and doubtless gave that great man the advantage of his experience among this strange people. The similarity of the conduit of each toward them, and the continued and lasting amity preserved from the first, show the same clement of kindness and fair dealing to have associated and controlled both. The same principles of justice and of right, so much extolled in the conduct of the Patroon of Pennsylvania, were no less rigidly adhered to by the Proprietors of New Jersey, always accomplishing the same end and deserving the same measure of praise.

In the progress of time, the children of William Cooper took upon themselves the responsibilities of matrimony, and set up their own establishments. Hannah married John Woolstan in 1681, and before her father removed from Burlington. This was his second marriage, the first wife being a sister of Thomas Olive, at that time governor of the province. He came in the same ship as the commissioners, and at his house were held the meetings of worship for Friends, in the early settlements. He was a worthy citizen, and the ancestor of numerous and respectable descendants, by the first marriage he had a son John, who, in 1683, married Lettice Newbold. In 1698, he (the father), died, disposing of a large landed estate by His children by Hannah Cooper were Samuel, who died single ; Jonathan, who married Sarah Pearson in 1707; Hannah, who married George Nicholson in 1706, Sarah, who married Edward Borton ; Mary, who married Samuel

Bunting in 1713; Joshua, who married _____; Michael; Elizabeth, who married Daniel Wills in 1714, and Rebecca, who married Francis Smith in 1714.

Jonathan removed to Bucks county, Pennsylvania, where he resided in 1715.^o The daughters settled in their native State, and became the maternal ancestors of some of the most respectable families 'hereabout.

The name of John Woolstan 'occurs among the Friends in England who suffered persecution for religious opinions. His house was the first erected in Burlington, and in it, the first monthly meeting of Friends was held after their arrival.

Hannah, his widow, married John Surkett of Burlington, as her second husband; he deceased in 1709,⁷ and she then married John Wills, son of Daniel, one of the commissioners, and father of Daniel, who married her daughter Elizabeth. There was no issue by either of the last marriages.

William Cooper married Mary, a daughter of Edward Bradway of Salem, N. J., in 1632. He died in 1691, leaving a will, in which he names his father, William Cooper, his father-in-law, his wife Mary, and three children, John, Hannah and Mary.' He probably died at Tyne Point, and perhaps unexpectedly, as Samuel Spicer and Henry Wood, both residents near that place, were witnesses to his will.

The inventory of his personal property discloses that he was a resident of Salem, and a blacksmith.^o His children married as follows : John married Ann Clark ; Hannah married John Mickle, and Mary Benjamin Thackara. As may be seen, William was about twenty years of age at the time of his coming to New jersey. He was employed by his father in his own calling; this made him a useful man among the adventurers. He 'died young, and by his will left the care of his children to Edward Bradway and John Kay.

John deceased in 1730, leaving his widow Ann and' the following children, James, John, David, Mary, Ann, Sarah, Hannah, and a child unborn."

6 Lib. A, 38.
Lib. No. t, 337.
8 Lib. A, Salem Wills, 83.

9 Lib. A, Salem Wills, 63.
to Lib. No. 3, tt8.

Joseph Cooper married Lydia Riggs in 1688. This female was of Irish parentage, but at the time of her marriage was a resident of Philadelphia. It is probable that, in 1695 (in which year the ferry and adjoining land were given to Daniel), William Cooper conveyed, by deed of gift, to Joseph, a tract of land bounded by Cooper's creek, east of his father's residence, where he, Joseph, settled. On February 18th, 1708, William Cooper conveyed two' hundred and twelve acres to Joseph. The words of the deed are, " William Cooper, late of Cooper's Point, in Newton, Gloucester county, New Jersey, to Joseph Cooper, of the same place, for his house, land and farm called Cooper's Point, where he lately dwelt." "

He had previously erected a house and out-buildings on a tract of land which he had located on the north side of Cooper's creek, in Waterford, now Delaware, township. A portion of this house is still standing, it being part of the homestead of Benjamin B. Cooper, deceased, about one mile from Ellisburg toward Camden; and it is now one of the land marks of early times. To this place he removed, but not long to remain, as he died in 1710.

In 1697, Joseph Cooper purchased of Abraham and Joshua Carpenter four hundred and twelve acres of land, in Newton township, bounded by Cooper's creek,—now constituting the most easterly part of the Cope estate." This he conveyed to his son Joseph in 1714, just as he had purchased it of the Carpenters. He owned much other real estate. He died in 1731, disposing of his property by will." His children were Isaac, who married Hannah Coates; Joseph, who married Mary Hudson and Hannah Dent; Benjamin, who married Rachel Mickle and Elizabeth Burcham (widow); Lydia, who married John Cox; Hannah, who married Alexander Morgan; Sarah, who married Joshua Raper; and Elizabeth, who married Samuel Mickle.

The most noticeable of these was Joseph, who erected a large brick house on the Carpenter tract, and there lived. There were several children by his first marriage, all of whom

11 Lib. AAA, 382.

12 Lib. A, 086

13 Lib. No. 3, 173.

died young, except Mary (and she before her father), who married Jacob Howell. She left two daughters, Hannah, who married John Wharton, and Mary, who married Benjamin Swett in 1762. Joseph Cooper, in his will, gave a tract of land, situated on the south branch of Cooper's creek, in Waterford, now Delaware, township, to these children, subject to the life estate of his second wife, Hannah, which, after her death in 1754, was divided between them. This tract of land, in the old papers called the "Wharton tract," many years since passed out of the family; it is now divided into several valuable farms, among which is one owned by the widow of Charles H. Shinn, deceased; and on it stands the old mansion, built before 1728, at which time it was occupied by George Ervin, a tenant of Joseph Cooper, the son of the first settler.

Hannah Dent, the second wife of Joseph Cooper, whom he married in 1735 in Philadelphia, was a minister among Friends, and came from England to New Jersey in 1723. The memorial published by the monthly meeting of Haddonfield, after her death in 1754, shows her to have been held in much esteem by that religious society. There were no children by this marriage.

Joseph Cooper died in 1749.^H During his life he was an active business man. He was a member of the Legislature of this State for nineteen consecutive years, which shows that he represented the people of Gloucester county in a manner satisfactory and acceptable, and, although more than one hundred years have passed away since that time, yet no like confidence has been extended to any representative of the constituency of this region. He held other official trusts in the county, which he discharged with fidelity; and he seems to have been universally respected. The Haddonfield Monthly Meeting also noticed his death, and left on record evidence of the estimation in which he was held by the Society of Friends.

Daniel Cooper, the youngest son of William, came to *New Jersey* when about seven years of age. There was no portion of his life of which his recollections were so vivid as that occupied in coming here. Alive to every object . **about him,**

in the novel position in which he then was, he could never forget them, and he doubtless in after years could enter more into the details of the voyage, than any other who shared it with him.

Without a regret, he looked happily forward, and, amid ever changing scenes, did not share the sorrow of his seniors in parting from friends and home. Of an age to attract attention, he doubtless made the acquaintance of all on board, ventured into every part of the ship, and was soon on social terms with the crew. Their odd dress, wonderful sea stories, and quaint ballads, excited his childish curiosity, and impressed upon his plastic mind things there to remain as long as he should live.

Daniel was twice married. In 1693, to Abigail Wood, a daughter of Henry and Hannah, who lived near by his father's place, but on the opposite side of Cooper's creek. At that time he took possession of the Roydon ferry, previously purchased by his father, and continued the same under the license granted to Roydon by the court sitting at Gloucester.

The license, as granted, is a curious document, but it embodies everything necessary to be said, either by way of explanation or for the exercise of authority in exacting tolls. No better history can be given of it than an entire copy from the record.

"WHEREAS, at a court held at Gloucester upon ye **first day of ye first month in ye year one thousand six hundred and eighty-seven it was presented to ye Bench that a constant and common ferry was very usefull and much wanted from Jersey to Philadelphia, and also that William Roydon's house was judged a place convenient, and ye said William Roydon a person suitable for that employ; and therefore an order from ye court was then granted** for ye establishment and fixing of ye same. Whereto ye bench did then and there assent, and **referred to ye Grand Jury ye methodizing of ye same, and to *fiz* ye rates thereof, which was by them agreed and concluded upon as hereunder follows:**

" Therefore we permit and appoint that a **common passage or ferry for man and beast be provided, fixed and settled in**

some convenient and proper place between ye mouths or entrances of Cooper's creek and Newton creek, and that ye government, managing and keeping of ye same be committed to ye said William Roydon and his assigns, who are hereby empowered and appointed to establish, fix and settle ye same within ye^e limits aforesaid, wherein all other persons are desired and requested to keep no other common or public passage or ferry.

"And ye said William Roydon shall prepare and provide good and sufficient boats, with other conveniences suitable to ye said employ, to be in readiness at all times to accommodate people's aasons, and shall take no more than six pence per head for such persons that shall be by him ferried over ye River, and not more than twelve pence for man and horse or other beast, and so not exceeding twelve pence per head for any sort of beast so ferried over, as above said; except swine, calves and sheep, which shall pay only six pence per head and no more.

"Given under our hands and seals at ye Court held at Gloucester for ye Jurisdiction thereof, this ye first day of ye first month, in ye year of our lord one thousand six hundred eighty and eight.

FRANCIS COLLINS,
ANDREW ROBESON,
JOHN WOOD,

CHRISTOPHER WATKINS,
SAMUEL SPICER.

"Entered, Examined and Recorded this 24th day of April, Ano 1689,

per me, JOHN READING, Recorder." ¹⁵

The accommodations at this ferry were nothing more than open boats fitted with oars, and occasionally with sails, which occupied much time in crossing, to say nothing of danger and exposure to passengers. A few trips each day were all that could be made in fair weather, and during a storm communication ceased altogether. Abigail Cooper, the wife of Daniel, died in a short time after their marriage, and without children, for, in 1695, he married Sarah, a daughter of Samuel and Esther

¹⁵ Lib, Gs, :to.

Spicer, who also lived on the north side of Cooper's creek near Pyne Point. On the 6th day of the second month, 1695, William Cooper conveyed to Daniel, the ferry, with one hundred and fourteen acres of land attached, and by the same deed other real estate in Gloucester county." Daniel and Sarah Cooper's children were three son,—William, who married Mary Rawle, of Philadelphia; Samuel S., who married _____ and Daniel, who married

Daniel Cooper died intestate, in 1715." The appraisement of his personal property amounted to four hundred and fifty pounds, including two ferry boats, showing that he resided at, and kept the ferry at the time of his decease. His real estate was large, and he was, no doubt, one of the wealthiest men of his day. In 1730, William Cooper, the scan of Daniel, petitioned Lord Cornbury, then Governor, fot a license to keep a ferry "where one had been kept for more than forty years ;" which license was granted, "with the exclusive right of ferry for two miles above, and two miles below, so long as he accommodated the people, upon the payment of one shilling yearly on the fast day of St. Michael the Archangel. "18 This charter was certainly a liberal one, extending beyond the limits of ' the present city of Camden, without any time fixed for its termination, and with a tax that, by the face of the document, was to be but nominal. It was a monopoly so far as regarded these privileges, within the distance named, but in after time it became modified, and finally was abandoned. The exact position of this ferry upon the river front is not now known; it was probably between Cooper street and Market street, as Royden's survey extended but a short distance above the first named street.

The amount of business done at this river crossing may be inferred from the number of inhabitants in this region in those days. The census of Gloucester county, taken in 1737, shows a population of three thousand two hundred and sixty-seven, including one hundred and twenty-two slaves." A large proportion of these lived near some navigable stream, depending

*6 Lib. A, 39.
17 Gloucester files.

113 IAt. AAA, so.
19 Lib. OH, t.

upon boats as a means of travel ; and, in going to Philadelphia, they would use their own transportation and not cross either at Gloucester or Cooper's ferry. Also it has been seen that, in 1715, Daniel Cooper had but two ferry boats, no doubt of ordinary size and without capacity for carrying many people; which kind of evidence goes very far to prove that the means, though scanty, were sufficient for the wants of the public.

Daniel, the youngest son of Daniel, in 1728, settled near the head of the north branch of Cooper's creek, on the farm lately owned by William Hooten, deceased. He was a farmer, but was sometimes called a drover. This latter occupation was only occasionally indulged in, to procure cattle from along the sea shore for himself and neighbors. These were bred upon the meadows, and in the endless forests abounding there in those days. Wild and nearly unmanageable, it required much tad, patience and woodcraft to control them.

The first William Cooper deceased in 1710, leaving a will, in which he named his children and disposed of the remainder of his property." His personal estate amounted to upwards of seven hundred pounds sterling,---a large sum for the times, but of small account in these days of wealth and pretension. 'Under the residuary clause of his will, parts of the estate passed to his grandchildren, who, at the time of his death, were John Cooper, Hannah Mickle, Mary Thackara, Joseph Cooper, Benjamin Cooper, Isaac Cooper, Lydia Cox, Hannah Thackara, Sarah Raper, Samuel Cooper, Daniel Cooper, Jonathan Woolstan, Samuel Woolstan, Mary Bunting, Sarah Borton, Elizabeth .Wills, William Cooper, Rebecca Smith, Hannah Nicholson, and Elizabeth Mickle.

It is scarcely necessary to say that William Cooper was an eminent member of the Society of Friends, and participated in everything that went to the advancement and stability of the church whose tenets he had espoused. He was a preacher among them, and lived at a time when the expounders of such (latrines were especially **.obnoxious** to the mass of the people of Great Britain; he, therefore, like others, suffered much thereby ; but, before his death, he saw the success of these

doEtrines and their free development in tile land of his adoption. He had much to do with the political management of the colony,. being a member of the first Legislature that sat for the framing of laws. This was a work of great labor, but, in the end, it showed good judgment and praelical common sense.

Adopting the statutes of England as the basis, they made the new features of their system conform thereto, so far as was consistent with the rights of the settlers. Inducements were held out for emigration, and the system of jurisprudence made as liberal as possible to accomplish that end. Through the several sittings of this session William Cooper was present, and participated, no doubt, discharging his duties acceptably. He was appointed one of the commissioners to divide land, and also one of the committee to devise means for raising money for the use of the colony. The next year he was continued a member. In 1684, when the trouble with Edward Byllynge in regard to the government was taken up, and Samuel Jennings and Thomas Budd sent to England as commissioners therefor," the sum of one hundred pounds was allowed to each for expenses; and to William Penn was to be paid a like sum for services in the same matter. To assure the payment' of these several sums, William Cooper, with nine others, joined in a bond as security therefor.

In 1685, he was again returned as a member of the Legislature, and also continued commissioner for the division of land. In 1696, he was appointed one of the judges of the several courts of the county of Gloucester ; he also filled many other minor appointments in a township capacity.

The remaining part of his original survey, being a small tile of land fronting on Cooper's creek and adjoining William Roydon's survey, William Cooper conveyed to two of his grandsons, John Cooper, son of William, and Joseph Cooper, son of Joseph ;" this was the last of the real estate held by him in Newton township. I-le liad made other surveys in different parts of Gloucester county, some of which he conveyed, and some passed by his will.

. 21 Learning & Spiccei Laws.

0 Lib: A, 28.

Parts of this real estate, particularly those within the city of Camden, still remain in the family, and have followed the blood of the first owner, under the proprietors, from generation to generation, for nearly two hundred years.

This is remarkable where the laws regulating the descent of real property are so liberal, and where the third generation seldom hold the land of their ancestors. Ability to possess, and a desire to perpetuate, family estates, are commendable traits; they deserve emulation and should become to a greater extent characteristics of Americans. Yet, in our haste to get gain, all things else become secondary, and the exceptions are among those who are not willing to venture the paternal acres in fortune's lottery.