

JOHN GILL.

JOHN GILL came to New Jersey under the patronage and guardianship of Elizabeth Estaugh. The blood relationship that existed between these two persons may be inferred from expressions that occur in the various papers of Elizabeth Estaugh, in reference to John Gill, and in her will, particularly, she names him as "*her kinsman.*" His parents resided in or near London, and his mother was probably a sister of John Haddon, father of Elizabeth.

Some of the name lived in Cumberland, others in Cornwall, Devonshire and Huntingdonshire; being Friends they were subjected to fines and imprisonments, for refusing to pay tithes, or attend the national church, and to do other things required under the laws then in existence.

Henry Gill lived at Godalming, in the county of Surrey, London, in 1670, and was fined on two occasions for not attending church at Guildford. This was in the same part of that city in which John Haddon resided, and this Henry Gill was probably the father of John.

This, however, is but conjecture, and, until a faithful search be made among the records of the meetings in that part of London, may so remain. The instances are but few in which the genealogies of families in America can be properly connected with those in England, a defect always to be regretted.

John Gill was a young man of considerable education, which was the exception at that day; he certainly had the confidence

and good opinion of his uncle and cousin, this good opinion being assured by the gift of a tract of land made to him by John Haddon, which gift was bestowed, in all probability in order that he might participate in the political affairs of the colony, then in much confusion.

The time of his coming over is in doubt, and that of his age at such coming; yet enough may be seen upon the records to prove that he must have followed his cousin very closely.

In 1709, he was appointed administrator of the estate of William Higgs, deceased, of Newton township,—conclusive evidence that he had arrived before that date, and also had attained his majority. So far as noticed, this is the first record of his name, and has much to do with settling the question here mooted.¹

In connection with John Estaugh, the management of John Haddon's estate here was controlled by him, and, no doubt, many of the locations returned to John Haddon were selected through his advice and observation.

John and Elizabeth Estaugh, and Benjamin and Sarah Hopkins conveyed all their landed estate to him in 1726, that which was in New Jersey being large and valuable. It was done to defeat the joint tenancy created under their father's will, and to place each share within the absolute control of its owner.^{2,3} After the decease of John Estaugh, he became the attorney and adviser of his widow, and managed her large estate in a proper and acceptable manner. It is needless to follow this line to prove the confidence that existed between Elizabeth Estaugh and John Gill, for, during his life, she took no step in the disposition of her estate, without some act of his appearing in connection therewith.

As to his position as a church member, he may also be judged by the intimacy between his cousin and himself; for it can be accepted as a truth, that Elizabeth measured every one according to the religious tenets to which she so rigidly adhered, and which were laid down by the great prototype and leader in her belief, George Fox.

¹ Gloucester Files, 1718.

² Lib. D, 413, 415.

³ Lib. D, 419.

JOHN GILL.

129

In 1723, commences the record of the proceedings of the town meetings of Newton, in a book which Thomas Sharp says that he was ordered to purchase, and for which he paid nine shillings. The first entry is this:

“At a town meeting held at Newton for the township, the twelfth day of the first month called March, 1723, in order to choose officers for the ensuing year, Joseph Cooper and John Gill were continued Overseers of the Poor, and having made up their accounts there is found to remain in bank for ye service the sum of six pounds fourteen shillings and ten pence.”

The overseers of the poor appear to have had charge of all the moneys of the township at that time, paying out the same and rendering a yearly account of such disbursements. This was continued for several years, which made the office one of the most responsible and important in the township. But John Gill withdrew from that position after the next year, the reason for which appears in a minute made in the book. The discharge of this duty he, no doubt, considered outside of his office, and that the best way to avoid a repetition thereof was to resign. The entry, as made, is as follows:

“At said meeting it was agreed yt Jonathan Bolton give some hay and corn to Ann Morris's horse, in order to make him capable to carry her to ye place from whence she came, and that she stay but until the seventeenth day of this instant; and after that the overseers of the poor force her away if she refuse to go; and that what charge is expended in ye perfecting of it shall be allowed by this meeting.”

What became of Ann Morris or her horse, does not appear from the record; but, it being a new feature in the duties of the overseers of the poor, neither Joseph Cooper or John Gill accepted the position for several years after that time.

When John Gill died, in 1749,⁴ his son John was old enough to take his place in the several positions which he, the father, had been called to fill, and, more particularly, in the management of the estate of Elizabeth Estaugh, which was constantly

⁴ Lib. No. 6, 231.

increasing, and which required his personal attention and good judgment; and, although Ebenezer Hopkins, her nephew, had married in 1737 and settled near her residence, yet John Gill, the son, appears to have had the same oversight of her estate that his father had during his life time.

He was a much more active business man than his father; this appears by his location, purchase and sale of lands in various sections of the country, by his participation in political affairs, and by the discharge of many duties involving the confidence of his neighbors and the public. He was one of the persons selected by Elizabeth Estaugh as executors of her will, which trust, thus bestowed, evidenced her regard for his capability and honesty.

The first grant of land made by John Haddon to John Gill was in 1714; it was for two hundred and sixty acres of the survey which he had purchased of Thomas Willis, a son of John, in 1698.⁵ This land was situated in Waterford township, now Delaware, on both sides of the Haddonfield and Berlin road, and near the head of what was formerly known as Swett's mill pond, now owned by Joseph C. Stafford, and others. The conveyance says that the land was then in the occupation of John Gill, the inference of which is that he resided thereon; if so, he lived in a small, hipped-roof frame house, which stood on the north side of the stream that falls into the mill pond—a house many years since torn down. It was surrounded by locust trees, some of which yet stand and mark the spot where his dwelling was situated. Although this place was in the midst of a forest, yet he was not entirely without neighbors. William Bates had settled on Tindall's run, about one mile west, where he was living with his Indian wife. George and Timothy Matlack, who purchased land the same year, had their plantations about two miles south; and Joseph Cooper had cleared some of the land given to him by his father, and had built a house on the opposite side of the stream, not far from the residence of John Gill. This was before his marriage, but the comforts of his bachelor home were, no doubt, looked after by some elderly female unknown to the present generation.

⁵ Lib. A, 13,

Previously to the year 1739, this tract of land passed into the possession of Bartholomew Horner, who, with his wife Elizabeth, conveyed it to their son Jacob. Jacob died intestate, and it descended to his oldest son, Isaac. He conveyed to his two brothers, Nathan and Jacob, and the first conveyed his interest to the last in 1771. In Jacob's family it remained for many years, but it now has passed out of the name.

The next residence of John Gill in Waterford township was near the north side of the south branch of Cooper's creek, where the King's highway crossed the same, and where the road leading to Edward Clemenz's landing turned to the westward from that thoroughfare. This property is now owned by James H. Billington.

It was a public place at that time, the landing being the highest on the creek; and thither all the wood and lumber in the region round about, intended for the Philadelphia market, were taken to be transported in vessels. The remains of the old wharf may yet be seen near the forks of the creek; and this place in the days of our ancestors was the scene of much business activity, occasioned by the teams in bringing, and the boats in taking away the only articles of sale and exchange among the people at that time. After 1715, it was known as Axford's landing, and it still retains the name; but some of the oldest inhabitants must be found, before the inquirer can know where to look for that place.

In a deed from William Lovejoy to Thomas Kendall, in 1697, a tract of land was conveyed, situated at a place called Uxbridge, "lying on the south branch of Cooper's creek on the road leading from Salem to Burlington."⁶

This tract of land was near where John Gill lived, and the name was probably given in expectation of a town springing up at that point, several years before there was any thought that Haddonfield, as a village, would have a name or an existence. The description in the deed is conclusive, as to the locality, and, although affixed twenty-five years before the present name was attached to the village, yet it never obtained any notoriety, and seems to have no history except in the old

⁶ Lib. B₂, 643.

conveyance above referred to. Although the name may more particularly apply to the land on the north side of the stream, yet, if a few houses had been built in 1697, and the improvements extended to the south side of the creek, the chances are that our forefathers would have adhered to the original title given at that period, and that the name of Haddonfield would never have been known, except as attached to the two residences of Elizabeth Estaugh. From this it may be inferred that William Lovejoy came from the town of Uxbridge, which is in Middlesex, England, about twenty miles from London, and that he wished to keep the name of his native place in remembrance, like many of his associates who came to New Jersey about the same time.

In 1718, John Gill married Mary Heritage, a daughter of Joseph and granddaughter of Richard Heritage,—the first of that name in these parts.⁶ Richard was a carpenter, and came from Brayle's Inn, Warwickshire, England.⁷ He purchased rights of Edward Byllynge, in 1684, and, upon his arrival here, made a location of land on the north side of the south branch of Penisaukin creek, in Burlington county, and called his new home "Hatten New Garden."⁸ He purchased other rights, and made other locations in that region. None of the land, as originally held by him, has been owned by the family for many years; and none of the name reside in that section of the country at the present time.

Richard Heritage died in 1702, without a will, and such parts of his land as he had not previously conveyed to his children, passed to his oldest son John, as his heir at law.⁹ His children were John, who married Sarah Slocum in 1706; Joseph, who married Hannah Allen in 1697; Sarah, who married William Clark in 1687; and Mary.

John died intestate in 1716, leaving two daughters,¹⁰—Mary, who married Hasker Newberry, and Naomi, who removed to Bladen county, North Carolina, and died a single woman. He lived on the homestead property after his father's death and until his own decease, but his descendants never occupied it.

⁶ Lib. No. 8, 358.

⁷ Lib. G2, 69.

⁸ Lib. G1, 141.

⁹ Lib. AL, 456.

¹⁰ Lib. No. 2, 82.

JOHN GILL.

133

Joseph's father conveyed considerable land to him, much of which he sold.¹¹ It lay on both sides of the creek, and, at the present time, it is divided into several valuable farms. The part which he occupied, was in Burlington county, and was bounded by the creek. He died in the year 1756, leaving a will.¹² His children were Richard, who married Sarah Whitall and Sarah Tindall; Joseph, who married Ruth Haines; Benjamin, who married Kesiah Matlack; John, who married Sarah Hugg; Mary, who married John Gill and John Thorne; and Hannah, who married ——— Roberts.

John and Mary Gill had but two children,—John, who married Amy, a daughter of David Davis of Salem county, in 1741, and Hannah, who married Thomas Redman of Haddonfield in 1737. John Gill died in 1749, and his widow married John Thorne in 1750.

In 1728, John and Elizabeth Estaugh conveyed to John Gill two tracts of land, one in Haddonfield, and the other (meadow) lying in Waterford (now Delaware) township.¹³ The first named tract was bounded by the westerly side of the King's road, and extended from Cooper's creek nearly to the Methodist church and contained eighty-seven acres. Four years after, the same persons granted John Gill three other lots, the largest of which joined the last named on the southwest; it is now divided by Grove street into nearly equal parts.¹⁴ The second of these is owned by Rennels Fowler and the devisees of John Clement, deceased, on the front; but nearly all the original lines have been obliterated. The third lot passed into the possession of his daughter, and upon it the old Thomas Redman mansion formerly stood.

These grants were "for love and affection," which the grantors bore the grantee. Part of this estate still remains in the family, and is now owned by John Gill, whose lineage can be readily traced to the first of the name in this region.

The first tract of land, as herein named, John Gill sold in a short time. He soon after came within the bounds of Newton township, where he made his permanent residence upon the

¹¹ Lib. G3, 182.

¹² Lib. No. 8, 358.

¹³ Lib. E, 373.

¹⁴ Lib. E, 375.

estate conveyed to him for a nominal consideration by John and Elizabeth Estaugh, between whom and himself there existed the pleasantest social intimacy.

This tract of land, or a large part thereof, was an open field, covered with wigwams and cabins of the natives. Prior to 1720, John Gill had enclosed part of it, and had the land under cultivation; for, in the description of the lot of land conveyed by John Haddon to Friends for the meeting-house lot, John Gill's fence is named as part of the boundary, which fence stood near where the turnpike road leaves the main street of Haddonfield.¹⁵ On this field, and perhaps at John Gill's house, were held the elections for members of the Assembly, annually. These elections were conducted in accordance to law, but they would appear strange to us of these latter days. By the act of 1682, the freeholders could meet at any place which they chose, and elect the members in any manner thought best at the time. The time, however, fixed by law, was the fourteenth day of the second month (being the 14th day of April) of each year. This law was changed, and the sheriff, or some other person appointed by the governor, was authorized to take the ballot box from place to place within the county, with two other persons selected by the candidates to act as officers of election. The consent of the candidates to remove from the place last selected, was required, but the rule generally required two days; at the end of that time, the polls were changed to some other desirable locality, within the county and convenient for the people. To accomplish an election therefore, several days were consumed, as the territory of Gloucester was large, Atlantic and Camden counties then being within the bounds of the old bailiwick.

Another curious feature of these elections was the few votes then polled. In 1737, there was but nine hundred and thirty white male persons above the age of sixteen, within the limits of the county; it may readily be seen how light the canvass was, and how few the inhabitants, even after some fifty years from the first settlement. The voting was done by voice, and not by ballot, as now; the name of the voter and that of the

¹⁵ Sharp's Book, 43, O. S. G.

person voted for, were recorded and copied for any person willing to pay for the same; publicity thus being given to the act of each person,—a peculiarity that would not be allowed at this time. The penalties against bribery and corruption were severe; but it is supposable that chicanery and deception were winked at among the electors, and that every kind of expedient was used by one party to defeat the other, each arguing, no doubt, that, unless their opponents were defeated, the country would be utterly ruined.

George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, during his travels in America in 1672, in going from Maryland to New York, passed through West New Jersey, and was, on several occasions, entertained by the Indians. It is well known that the Indian trail, first traveled by the whites from Salem to Amboy, crossed Gloucester county near where Haddonfield now stands, and that the same trail was used for many years after the earliest settlements. Along that path George Fox and his associates must have traveled, and it is no stretch of fancy to say that they were entertained by the natives who lived at the "Great Fields," now the town aforesaid. In his journal he says:

"We came one night to an Indian town and lay all night at the king's house, who was a very pretty man. Both he and his wife received us very lovingly, and his attendants (such as they were) were very respectfull to us. They laid mats for us to lie on; but provisions were very short with them, having caught but little that day."

Whether the king, whose fine appearance and noble bearing attracted the attention of this remarkable man, resided here or not, cannot be known at this late day. It is, however, a pleasant incident in the early history of the village to associate his movements in this connection.

In the year 1740, John Gill, as attorney for the heirs-at-law of Joseph Elkinton, deceased, went to England to recover an estate claimed by them, and at that time remaining unsettled. This property was situated in Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, where suits at law were prosecuted for obtaining possession thereof; which, after several years of litigation, proved suc-

cessful. The children of Joseph Elkinton, who was a son of George, the first comer to New Jersey of that name, were Mary, the wife of David Stratton, of Evesham, Burlington county, N. J.; Ann, the wife of Stephen Brooks, of the same place; Elizabeth, wife of John Lippincott, also of the same place; Frances and Amy Elkinton. Numerous affidavits were taken here and appear on record, showing whence and when George Elkinton emigrated to New Jersey, whom he married, and many other particulars necessary to connect the claimants here with the family remaining in England.¹⁶ The matter was fiercely contested in the courts, consuming much time and money before its conclusion. The account book of John Gill relating to this transaction, is still preserved in the family, showing the care and precision observed by him in rendering a statement of his proceedings in the premises.

During his absence, his wife Mary and son John, acting by letters of attorney, sold a lot of land in Haddonfield to Timothy Matlack (1744), and had general oversight of his affairs hereabout. While living there (1746), he purchased a tract of land of John Cox, also a resident of London, lying on the south side of the south branch of Cooper's creek about two miles from Haddonfield. The next year after the purchase, he deeded this survey to his son John, a part of which has remained in the family and name to the present day. The old Salem road passed through this tract, and the second John sold most of that which lay west of the same. Like many other such pieces of land, the old lines, owing to the division, sale and exchange of property, have become entirely unknown to this generation.

The account book before mentioned shows that John Gill, while residing in London, frequently paid his *brother William* for "diet and lodging," proving that there were others of the name and family in that city. He never returned to the land of his adoption, but died in London.

The children of John and Amy Gill were Mary, who married Jacob Roberts; Sarah, who married Job Whitall; Amy, who married Joab Wills; Elizabeth, who married Jacob Burrough;

¹⁶ Lib. AAA, 29.

JOHN GILL.

137

John, who married Anna Smith; and Mercy, who married Samuel Abbott.

Amy deceased, and, in 1767, he married Abigail Hillman, widow of Daniel and daughter of Samuel Nicholson. She died without issue, and, in 1781, he married Sarah Pritchett, widow of Josiah and daughter of John Cowperthwaite. There was no issue by the last marriage. John died in 1794. A noticeable feature in the genealogy of this family is that, for several generations, there has been but one son, to whom has always been given the christian name of the first comer, which has limited the surname of the branch of the family hereabout to but few persons.

Thomas Redman, who married Hannah, should be noticed in this connection. He was a son of Thomas, one of the first settlers in the city of Philadelphia, and one of the leading mechanics at that time. In 1712, he was a member of the city council, and participated much in the affairs of the colony during William Penn's residence there.

The son was apprenticed to a druggist, and, upon attaining his majority, removed to Haddonfield, and continued the same business. He was held in great respect among Friends, and traveled much as a minister in that religious denomination. Hannah, his wife, died, leaving three children,—Mary, who married Mark Miller; Thomas, who married Mercy Davis in 1747, of Salem county; and John, who married Sarah Branson.

He married Mary ——, a second wife, and died in 1766, leaving a will, in which he disposed of a large amount of real and personal property;¹⁷ the appraisement alone amounting to more than five thousand pounds, sterling. There was no issue by the last marriage.

The third Thomas Redman was also educated as a druggist, and continued the same calling, but was more of a public man, politically speaking, than his father. He was a careful business man, and, as a conveyancer, had the confidence of the entire community. Although he adhered to the detailed and elaborate forms of English titles, yet plainness of penmanship and clearness of intention characterized all his legal papers. His

¹⁷ Lib. No. 12, 363.

correctness in copying was proverbial, and Chief Justice Kirkpatrick of this State, on one occasion, paid him the compliment of not comparing documents prepared by him, saying that "papers from the hands of Thomas Redman needed no such scrutiny."

He was a valuable man in the society of Friends, and did much to sustain the church in this region of country. Many anecdotes are related of him, showing that he was an upright business man, plain of speech, consistent in his profession, faithful in his trusts, and scrupulous in all his dealings.

Among the several positions of public trust which John Gill was called upon to fill, was that of commissioner of loans, he being one of the three appointed for Gloucester county. The object of the law, and the duty of the commissioners, appear to have been to loan bills of credit issued by the State, to such persons as could give satisfactory security for the repayment of the same; and this security had to be in the shape of mortgages on real estate, of the value of which the commissioners were to be satisfied by personal view.

These commissioners were constituted bodies politic and corporate, in succession, in fact, and in law, to sue and be sued, and with various other powers in the act named. No greater sum than four hundred pounds, nor any less than fifteen pounds, could be loaned to one person for the space of twenty years, at five per cent. per annum. This system of supplying the country with money was in operation for several years, but at last fell into disuse, and the law finally repealed. While John Gill was thus acting as commissioner, and had charge of the securities during the revolutionary war, his house was pillaged by a party of British soldiers, and, among other things, these were carried off and not recovered. By an act of the Legislature of New Jersey, in 1779, he was indemnified from any loss concerning the same.

Although many of this name may be found in New Jersey, yet they do not appear to have originated with the family herein mentioned.