

GEORGE GOLDSMITH.

THOMAS SHARP, in his memorial of the settlement of Newton, says that George Goldsmith was one of the persons who came with him in the pink called "Ye owners adventure," of which Thomas Lurtin, of London, was commander. In another paper, also left by Friend Sharp, he says George Goldsmith "is an old man,"—an expression rather indefinite, but supposed to mean a middle-aged person without family. It may also be inferred that he came without any estate, since, in the location of land, he represented a tenth of one whole share owned by Thomas Starkey. Although he had no written authority from Thomas Starkey, yet Thomas Sharp had knowledge of his desire that Goldsmith should make selections of land for him; and, upon these representations, the commissioners allowed a survey to be made, extending from Newton creek to Cooper's creek, containing about five hundred acres of land. Upon further investigation, it was discovered that Thomas Starkey did not furnish the "rights" necessary to complete the title to said survey, and, as George Goldsmith found himself in a "strait," he (Goldsmith) induced Robert Turner, of Philadelphia, to return the location in his own name, the latter allowing Goldsmith one hundred acres of land, in view of his trouble in the premises.

The one hundred acres which Robert Turner allowed to George Goldsmith, were conveyed by deed, dated the thirtieth of the ninth month, 1687, but in separate tracts, one of eighty acres and one of twenty acres, lying some distance apart.¹

¹ Lib. G, 31.

The larger piece was part of the survey as made by Goldsmith; it fronted on the main branch of Newton creek, and adjoined the upper line of the first general survey of the *Newton peoples*, as expressed in one of the old deeds. The exact position of this piece of land has been lost sight of through the various alterations of boundaries, and the many changes of titles since that date.

The smaller tract was situated near the forks of the main and the north branch of the last named stream, adjoining Thomas Sharp's and Stephen Newbie's lands.

George Goldsmith made his improvements on the upper or larger piece of land, for he conveyed the twenty acres to Stephen Newbie the next day after he had procured his title.² On the same day on which he sold the twenty acres to Stephen Newbie, (tenth month first, 1687,) he purchased a like quantity of land of Francis Collins, adjoining the upper lot; thus making his plantation of one hundred acres at one place on the creek, "about as high as the tide flows."³

The map showing Robert Turner's lands in Newton township marks the residence of George Goldsmith as on the twenty acres in the forks of the creek; but this is probably an error, since the records prove the conveyance of that piece of land as before stated.

This is further proved by the writings of Thomas Sharp in this relation, in which mention is made of the agreements between Turner and Goldsmith to have his land, *where he had made his improvements*, referring no doubt to the five hundred acres' location.

But little importance, however, attaches to this, except to show where the first comers erected their humble habitations and removed the forest to plant their crops. The instances are but few where such first settlements are known to have been made, as later generations found more eligible spots, and had little regard for the places where the old homes stood. Even with the original proprietor, such were only temporary buildings, and were changed as soon as time and circumstances would permit,—forgotten before the second generation had passed away.

² Lib. G, 25.

³ Lib. G, 28.

Robert Turner kept the remainder of the five hundred acres' location until 1693, when he sold it to Isaac Hollingsham, whose son Isaac, a few years after, conveyed the same to Sarah Ellis, widow of Simeon; and in her family, parts thereof remained for many years.

Joseph Ellis, a son of Sarah, settled on these lands, which in progress of time passed to the female branches of his family, and, consequently, out of the name.

Although the name of George Goldsmith enters much into the documents and papers of the times in which he lived, yet of himself or family, if any he had, but little can be discovered. He was a member of Friends' meeting, but the only notice of his participation in religious matters is the minute of the Salem Meeting in 1681, when Richard Robinson and George Goldsmith were appointed a committee to speak to Thomas Smith "about his disorderly walking," &c.

This was during the first winter after his arrival from Ireland and before the settlement at Newton, showing that, although a stranger among the Salem people, yet he was soon called upon to discharge a delicate and important religious duty. If the first books of records of the Newton Meeting had been preserved, perchance his name would have occurred therein, and have shown something of his standing among his neighbors and the interest he took in the advancement of the church in America. He appears to have been something of a land jobber, for, in 1693, he sold "rights" to William Albertson.⁴

In 1694, he conveyed to Nicholas Smith twenty-four acres of land in Newton township, situated on the north branch of the creek of that name, and, in the next year, conveyed one hundred acres near the last named tract to John Iverson, who, in 1697, sold said one hundred acres to Margaret Ivins.⁵

He appears to have kept clear of the political troubles that surrounded him, and avoided all the religious controversies then being carried on in the colonies. His name is not mentioned among the appointments of colony, county, or township officers, nor in any of the paper warfare so diligently waged among the religious zealots of the times.

⁴ Lib. G3, 199.

⁵ Lib. G3, 41, 242.

The records of the Friends' meeting of Philadelphia in the year 1696, show that George Goldsmith and Ellen Harrison were married according to the good order of that Society, after the several "passings" then customary on such occasions. As all means of identity (except the name) have passed away, some doubt exists as to whether the two names mean the same person; or whether the George Goldsmith, of Newton, in the colony of West New Jersey, is the same George Goldsmith that married Ellen Harrison in Philadelphia in 1696. Such marriages frequently occurred, and often mystify the genealogy of families, sometimes to the entire defeat of the searcher.

It has happened that persons were supposed to have died single, and the family tree has so been made up, when the truth is, that such had gone from their particular meeting and contracted matrimony in other places.

If, as Thomas Sharp says, George Goldsmith was an old man in 1681, the fifteen intervening years could not have added anything to his youth, or his inclinations toward matrimony; and the fair presumption is that the subject of this sketch was not the person named in the records of the Philadelphia Friends' Meeting, in connection with the aforesaid marriage.

The little that is known of him in after years, leads to the inference that he removed from this region of country, disposed of his real estate, and left none of his blood or name behind him. In Pennsylvania, and in other parts of New Jersey, the name sometimes occurs; but, in Old Gloucester, since the beginning of the eighteenth century, and, in fact, since the departure of this man, but few of like surname have resided.

This, however, is speculation, and not intended to lead any one astray, for his descendants may be traced through the female branches of his own blood, as definitely and as correctly as in any other manner, if such theory be a proper one, and the starting point be beyond a doubt.

Such difficulties in genealogy add much to the interest of the search, provided always that success attends the labor, and a knotty, troublesome question is solved.