

From the foregoing declaration much information may be gathered beside that which pertains to the subject in question. It discloses the age of William Matlack in 1720; it shows that he had attained his majority before his arrival in America. According to an agreement then common among the emigrants, he was to serve Daniel Wills for four years after his coming hither; in which service he worked as a carpenter. They came in the ship "Kent," Gregory Marlow, master; after having touched at Sandy Hook, they found their way into the river Delaware, and, from some unknown cause, the passengers were landed near the mouth of Raccoon creek.² Their destination was evidently higher up the stream, as the commissioners soon left the vessel, and proceeded in a small boat to Chygoe's island (afterwards Burlington), and, according to a tradition in the family, William Matlack "was the first person that put his foot upon the shore." It is also shown that the island referred to was not that in the river, but the piece of land on which the city of Burlington stands, nearly surrounded by the Assiscunk creek, which, Samuel Smith says, procured its name from an Indian sachem who lived there. The first "boate" mentioned was the little craft in which the commissioners and a few other persons came from Raccoon creek, and not the ship Kent, which was probably injured, and did not proceed to the end of the voyage. The passengers, after suffering many privations, mostly found their way to Burlington, and settled in the neighborhood.

William Matlack came from a small village in Nottinghamshire, England, called Cropwell Bishop, which lies about seven miles southeast of the city of Nottingham. As a mechanic, he worked upon the first houses built in Burlington, and helped to erect Thomas Olive's corn mill, the first of that kind in West Jersey. He saw a town rise up in the midst of the forest, surrounded by a thriving population, busy in clearing the land and enjoying the reward of their labor. His leisure hours were spent among the natives, watching their peculiarities and striving to win their good will. Following the advice and example of the commissioners, every promise made by him to the aborigines was faithfully kept, and every contract strictly adhered to.

² Smith's History of New Jersey, 93.

In 1681, there came from Brayles, a small town in the southern part of Warwickshire, a young man named Timothy Hancock, accompanied by his sister, who was about fifteen years of age. Without friends or means, they lived in a very humble manner among the settlers, but the demand for workmen soon found Timothy employment, and the demand for wives did not leave Mary long without a suitor. She was married to the subject of this sketch the next year. They then removed to a tract of land which he had located between the north and south branch of Penisaukin creek in Chester township, Burlington county.³ Her brother also located a survey adjoining, and, in 1684, married Rachel Firman. These surveys contained one hundred acres each, and were generally known as "head lands," being the quantity to which each male person coming as a servant was entitled under the regulation established by the proprietors. Many young men were styled "servants" and received their one hundred acres of land, who were persons of education, and who afterwards became prominent citizens in the colony.

This was near the Indian town of Penisaukin, where the natives for many years after had a village, and where may yet be seen the remains of the graveyard; which burial places they held in so much reverence and respect, that long journeys were made to visit the remains of their departed friends and connections. Within the memory of those now living, have these burial places been visited by this peculiar people, around which they would remain for a few days, and then mysteriously disappear from the neighborhood. This sacred regard for the dead formed a strange contrast with other characteristics of their savage natures; it showed a tenderness of feeling and a degree of refinement, not always found in civilization.

This stream (Penisaukin creek) bears one of the few Indian names that have come down to the present generation, and, although much corrupted, it has enough remaining to detect its origin.

In 1682, when John Roberts, William Matlack, and Timothy Hancock located the land, they called it Pen-is-au-kin—giving

³ Basse's Book, 35.

the stream the same name as that by which the Indians styled their village then adjoining. This word has been spelled in various ways, with as many definitions, one of which is that William Penn reserved a hawking privilege in the sale of lands there, and thence called the stream Pennshawking creek. This idea is at once demolished upon an examination of the records, for there it may be found as obtained from the natives, and as by them pronounced.

The corruption, or rejection of the Indian names of streams and localities in America, is to be regretted; for their significance and beauty have no parallel in the English tongue, and they are passing away like the people that gave them character and expression, almost without a history or a kindly remembrance. The yielding of the weaker to the stronger race, of savage life to the progress of civilization, has left but a remnant of this people among us. Being without a written history, their legends, their language, and their names, will soon be among the things that have passed beyond the possibility of restoration. It is remarkable that, in the development of literature and the advancement of education, so little has been done to collect and arrange the language of the aborigines of our land. But a single record of their language is known to have been made in West New Jersey, and that by the authorities of Salem county; it is contained in one of their first books, now on file in the office of Secretary of State at Trenton, in which much care has been taken, and from which much information may be had.

William Matlack and Timothy Hancock soon found their neighborhood was a desirable one; for new settlements were made there in a short time, and went on increasing until a meeting of Friends was established at the house of Timothy Hancock by the consent of Burlington Friends in 1685. This was held on alternate first-days with one at the house of John Kay, on the north branch of Cooper's creek, for the accommodation of Friends at Penisaukin and Evesham. These were continued until about the year 1707. At these places many marriages were solemnized during that time, the knowledge of which would add much to the early history of this section of the State.

Thomas Story, an eminent public Friend, who traveled in America in 1700, says that he went from Philadelphia to the Chester meeting (now Moorestown, Burlington county) by water, and upon his return stayed at night at the house of Esther Spicer, the widow of Samuel Spicer, where he was well entertained. This widow lady, who survived her husband several years, then lived near the river shore on the north side of Cooper's creek, now Stockton township, Camden county.

The Matlack family in New Jersey have been remarkably prolific, which peculiarity began with William and Mary; and any attempt to follow the genealogy would lead to endless collaterals, and be attended with much doubt and uncertainty. The children of the first settlers, however, were John, who married Hannah Horner and Mary Lee; George, who married Mary Foster and Mary Hancock; Mary, who married Jonathan Haines and Daniel Morgan; William, who married Ann Antrim; Richard, who married Rebecca Haines and Mary Cole; Joseph, who married Rebecca Haines; Timothy, who married Mary Haines; Jane, who married ----- Irvin; and Sarah, who married Carlyle Haines. From these marriages has sprung one of the largest families in New Jersey, and, one which, at this date, has found its way into every state in the Union.

In 1701, William Matlack purchased about one thousand acres of land of Richard Heritage, situated in Waterford and Gloucester townships, in Camden county (then Gloucester), lying on both sides of the south branch of Cooper's creek, around and near the White Horse tavern.⁴

In 1705, John Matlack purchased two hundred acres of land of Francis Collins in Waterford township. In 1708, he married Hannah Horner, and settled upon his purchase. A part of this estate is now owned by the heirs of John Wilkins, deceased, who there reside. The old house erected by the first owner stood a short distance from the handsome edifice of the present occupants; this old house was pulled down a few years since, for one hundred and fifty years rendered it unfit, both in comfort and style, for further use.

In 1714, William Matlack gave his son George five hundred acres of land in Waterford township, being part of that which

⁴ Lib. G₂, 143.

he had purchased of Richard Heritage.⁵ George had previously married Mary Foster, and settled on this tract. His house stood near the residence of Israel Riggins, on the south side of the present Haddonfield and Berlin road, near Glendale. He built the saw mill on the south branch of Cooper's creek, formerly known as "Hilliard's" mill, having gone to ruin many years since. This tract of land is now divided among several good farms.

In 1717, William Matlack purchased two hundred acres of land of John Estaugh, as attorney of John Haddon, on which his son Richard settled in 1721—the same year in which he married Rebecca Haines.⁶ This tract lies in Waterford and Delaware townships. Upon it is situated the old Matlack graveyard, where lay the remains of nearly all the older branches of the family. Richard (the first settler), who deceased in 1778, was the second person buried here, his son Benjamin being the first. In 1779, this estate passed out of this name to William Todd, but was subsequently purchased by Richard M. Cooper, father of the present owner, and a lineal descendant in the maternal line of the first settler.

In 1714, William Matlack gave his son Timothy the remaining part of the tract of land which he had purchased of Richard Heritage in Waterford township. Here Timothy built a house and settled.⁷ The house stood on the farm now owned by Ephraim Tomlinson, a short distance from Glendale. In 1720, Timothy married Mary Haines. He remained on the farm only a short time, as, in 1726 he sold the same and removed to Haddonfield, where he erected a house and kept a store.

Among the children of Timothy Matlack, a son Timothy was born in Haddonfield, 1730. He removed to Philadelphia at an early age, and became one of the prominent citizens of that place.⁸ During the Revolutionary war, although a Quaker, he held a colonel's commission in the army, and was an active officer throughout that struggle. For this he was dealt with, and lost his membership in that religious body. In connection with Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris and others, a society was

⁵ Lib. A, 09.

⁶ Lib. A, 50.

⁷ Lib. A, 08.

⁸ Lives of Eminent Philadelphians, &c., 685.

established in Philadelphia, called the "Free Quakers." He was secretary to the Continental Congress for some time, while it sat in that city, and was known as an open and decided advocate for the separation of the colonies from the mother country. His portrait now hangs in the Hall of Independence, among many of his contemporaries of that eventful period. He died in 1829, and was buried in the graveyard of the religious society of which he was a member, in south Fifth street, Philadelphia.

He never lost his interest in the place of his nativity, and, in his declining years, often related the story of his being in one of the apple trees in John Gill's orchard, and listening to John Estaugh preach in the Friends' meeting-house near by. This was when he was a boy. If Friend John had espied him preying upon his fruit, the inclinations of the flesh would have prompted him to visit condign punishment upon the offender; but Timothy understood his habits too well, not to know when to make these predatory excursions, and get safely away, loaded with plunder. This further shows that John Gill's farm extended along the north side of the King's road to the meeting-house; mention of which is made in the deed for the meeting-house lot.

Asa Matlack, now deceased, a descendant of the first settler and formerly residing near Moorestown, Burlington county, New Jersey, on a part of the original estate, collected and preserved a history of the direct and collateral branches of the family, showing how rapidly it spread through the country and became connected with those of the early settlers. Although not arranged for easy reference, yet the collection, as it stands, evidences much labor, and is invaluable to any one in search of genealogical matter connected therewith.

The tract of lands owned by William Matlack and his sons John, Timothy and Richard, extending from the White Horse tavern to the farm of Joseph H. Ellis, both included, and lying on both sides of the Moorestown and Woodbury road, contained some fifteen hundred acres; it passed out of the name more than sixty years since, part by marriage, but much the larger part by sale.