

## ROBERT ZANE.

ROBERT ZANE was the pioneer of the settlement at Newton. He was the first of that colony who left the shores of his native land to seek a new home in an unknown and unsettled country.<sup>1</sup> He did not wait the tardy movements of his associates, but took advantage of the first opportunity by which he could become acquainted with the place in which his life was to be spent, his children to be reared and his bones to be laid. With the vigor of youth and a fondness for adventure, he entered upon his purpose with a determination that could not be foiled. He was too young to be the victim of religious persecution, yet his sympathies were with those whose estates were being wasted, and whose persons were at the caprice of unrestrained authority. While these abuses excited his indignation, riper minds than his had convinced him that new homes, new laws and new rulers were the only hopes for security and peace. The records of his time follow so close upon his footsteps that he is seldom lost sight of, and, from the first to the last, no question arises as to his identity under so many different aspects.

Thomas Sharp, in his Memorial, refers to him as coming from the city of Dublin to Salem four years before he, Sharp, came to Newton; and all authorities agree that he was one of the members of the first Friends' Meeting established at Salem in 1675. He probably was in the ship with John Fenwick, among many other emigrants who arrived at Elsinburg in September

<sup>1</sup> Hazzard's Annals of Pennsylvania, 422.

of the year named, this vessel being the first which came to Salem under the auspices of that remarkable man. There is abundant evidence that his stay at Salem was designed to be but temporary, although his name frequently occurs in the proceedings of the Friends' Meetings of that place, from the year 1678 to the time of his removal. His name is not among those signed to the agreements made by the planters with the chief proprietor; nor was he of those who located lands in the Salem Tenth, and received their title from the same person with a view to permanent settlement. He does not appear to have participated in the government of the colony, or to have been a party to the troubles between Fenwick and his Dutch and English rivals. His only purchase of real estate during the four years of his residence there, was that of a town lot, which he subsequently sold to William Royden in 1689, several years after he had settled at Newton.<sup>2</sup> Thus the whole course of his actions, previous to the coming of Thomas Thackara and of the others with whom he associated, shows that his departure from home with John Fenwick was made in expectation of being followed by them, and of their forming a united settlement within the bounds of the Irish Tenth, many miles from the place of his first arrival. The limits of the territory in which this settlement was to be made, were shown to him soon after the arrival of the London and Yorkshire commissioners, as lying between Penisaukin and Timber creeks, two large and well defined streams. Beside these, but two others, at all navigable, found their way into the Delaware within the bounds fixed; upon any one of which the selection could be made. No one can doubt that Robert Zane traversed each of these to examine locations, test the soil and discover the most eligible place "to settle down by." Opposite to where the Swansons had made their farms, and where now stands the southerly part of the city of Philadelphia, the mouth of Newton creek opened into the river and was in full view from the spot where their houses stood. Near their dwellings a few scattered huts were already built, which gave the place some pretensions to a town, whose inhabitants, however, at that time, were all Swedes.

<sup>2</sup> Salem Deeds No. 4, 168.

About this time William Penn arrived at Shackomaxin, and the prospect was that a town would be laid out, extending along the river front from the last named point down to the little Swedish village; and including it. To be near this growing place, Robert no doubt, considered desirable; and, when his friends arrived from Ireland, he called their attention to these advantages, and, through his representations, the place on the north bank of Newton creek was fixed upon, and an embryo town soon built.

These friends and associates, to whom reference has before been made, may be known through two separate and distinct papers, bearing widely different dates, and made for entirely different purposes. The first is a deed, dated April 12th, 1677, made by Edward Bylinge and his trustees to Robert Turner, of Dublin,<sup>3</sup> "*Robert Zane, of Dublin, Serge Maker, and others for one whole share of Propriety in West New Jersey;*" and the second is the Memorial of Thomas Sharp, dated in 1718, in which a history is given of all their proceedings down to the writing of the same, covering a space of forty-one years, and until after the death of several of those in the first interested. Taking these papers together, the one as the first and the other as the last, the coincidence of names, dates and localities are remarkable, and puts at rest any question touching the persons participant in that adventure.

As an artisan, Robert Zane was a worker in wool, manufacturing a kind of material that bears the same name to this day, and which is used for the same purpose.<sup>4</sup> It is probable that he brought his looms with him, but he found no use for them here for several years after his coming, for the reason that the required material was not produced until agriculture had been somewhat advanced, and the people had made themselves farms from lands where before had stood an unbroken forest. A majority of his associates were educated to the same kind of labor, and, although producing a different stuff from their looms, yet all came under the general head of "Weavers," and were thus known among their neighbors.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. B-2, 52.

<sup>4</sup> Lib. B-2, 52.

In 1679 he married Alice Alday, of Burlington, in the Friends' Meeting at that place. Alice was, in all probability, an Indian maiden. A faithful search among the names of the early settlers reveals none similar to hers; and it may fairly be concluded that Robert became enamored of the bronzed beauty in one of his perambulations among the natives of the soil. Perhaps some hunting expedition found him at night-fall, hungry and foot-sore, near the hospitable wigwam of an Indian chief, by whom he was invited to rest and accept the good cheer set before him; and, while the assurance of welcome delayed him for the night, he may have noticed a daughter of his host, of artless ways and graceful movements.

"What though the sun with ardent frown,  
Had slightly tinged her cheek with brown,"

he could see in her a comely, and, to his youthful eye, an attractive person. To the talk by the evening fire, during which the old chief questioned him about "the story of his life," the dark-haired damsel would listen, and with "a greedy ear devour up his discourse," and thus give him an opportunity to watch her interest in his words, and to draw from her, at least, a look of sympathy. In relating the sad story of the wrongs that drove him, and those who were soon to follow, from their homes, he enlisted her pity, and thus won her love.

In settling the preliminaries of the marriage, a name known in the English tongue must be agreed upon; this trouble was easily overcome by those whose hopes and wishes now so closely assimilated. A due regard for the discipline of the church required that her ideas of religious belief should conform to the notions of Friends; this being made satisfactory, and a name having been fixed by her parents, nothing remained but the consummation of the nuptials.

This marriage doubtless brought together a strange assemblage within the tent in which the meetings at Burlington were then held. Beside the plain and unpretending dress of the Quaker might be seen the gaudy and warlike costume of the aborigines, and while the one was characteristic of non-resistance and peace, the other bespoke resentment and revenge. In the one, humility and a patient waiting for results were apparent; a

bold and defiant expression could be seen in the bearing of the other. The restraining influence of civilization was strikingly contrasted with unlettered barbarism.

The arrival of his friends from Dublin in 1681, and their purpose to take up their abode in the Irish Tenth, made it necessary that Robert Zane should remove from Salem in order to carry out the original agreement formed before his coming to New Jersey. This may be inferred from Friend Sharp's history of that event, as well as from the deed before named.<sup>5</sup> In the search "up and down," he doubtless was the leader, and pointed out the advantages and disadvantages of the different points, and gave them his knowledge of the surrounding country. His right was one-tenth of a whole share, and this, under the several dividends, gave him the privilege of making surveys, of which he and his sons took advantage, as appears by the records of that time.

In the division of the original survey of one thousand seven hundred and fifty acres, as made in 1681,<sup>6</sup> he took for his share, the upper part which extended from Newton creek to Cooper's creek, and which now includes the Collings estate, the Barton farm, and the plantation formerly held by Amos Haines, with other sub-divisions. He was the owner of property at Gloucester, which he disposed of previous to his death.<sup>7</sup>

With the political matters of the colony he had somewhat to do, being elected to the first Legislature in 1682, and returned in 1685.<sup>8</sup> During these sittings many important laws were passed, their necessity arising out of the new order of things, and being based upon a new charter of rights. The most of these were found to be salutary, and but little complaint arose among the people.

In 1684 and also in the following year, he filled the office of constable; but what executive duties he had to discharge when the inhabitants were so few, it is hard to understand. Each tenth appears to have had an officer of this character, appointed annually by the Legislature, whose authority was confined to the bounds of the same, while the sheriff, who was also

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Sharp's Memorial.

<sup>6</sup> Revels' Book, 52,

<sup>7</sup> Lib. W., 59, O. S. G.

<sup>8</sup> Leaming & Spicer's Laws.

appointed by the same power and for the same time, had his duties enlarged to the vaguely defined boundaries of the counties, which boundaries in after years led to much trouble and litigation.

Although his name does not appear among the records of the Newton Friends, yet he was an active member in that meeting and sought to maintain and advance their religious principles. In his day and generation opinions were well defined upon those points, and men were advanced in accordance with their views expressed or understood.

In the year 1686, Robert Zane fell into a difficulty with a female, formerly a servant in his family, touching some obligations on his part not complied with. The trouble assumed such proportions that it got beyond the control of the meeting, and found its way to the courts of justice, in which it became a matter of public record. The minute book of the court sitting at Gloucester explains the dispute, and the entire copy, as found and extracted by Isaac Mickle, Esq., is its best history.<sup>9</sup>

“Upon ye complaint of Rebecca Hammond against her late master, Robert Zane, for want of necessary apparel, as also his failure in some covenants that he was by his Indenture to perform; it was ordered yt ye said Robert Zane before ye first day of ninth month next, shall find and give to ye said Rebecca Hammond apparel to the value of three pounds seven shillings and sixpence. And also fifty acres of land to her and her heirs forever. And in case ye said Robert dislike this order, then to stand and abide by ye act of Assembly in ye like case provided. Whereupon the said Robert Zane did at last declare that he would comply with ye aforesaid order and answer ye same.”

This appears to have been an act within the power of the court upon complaint of the servant, under the law passed in 1682, which gave authority to examine into and settle such controversies between master and servant.<sup>10</sup> The law required that the servant should have, at the end of the term, ten bushels of corn, necessary apparel, two horses and one axe. The fifty

<sup>9</sup> Mickle's Reminiscences of Old Gloucester, 39.

<sup>10</sup> Leaming & Spicer's Laws.

acres referred to were known as "head land," to which able bodied servants were entitled, and which the court directed to be conveyed. Friend Zane was not lessened by this suit in the good opinion of his neighbors, for his name is found in connection with many positions of trust after that time.

His house stood fronting Newton creek, near to, and perhaps a short distance above, the place where the Camden and White Horse turnpike crosses that stream, and on the farm lately owned by the heirs of Edward Z. Collings, deceased. Like all others of its day, no taste was displayed in its construction, but, being surrounded by the primeval forest, and near a beautiful, living stream of water, its wild and romantic appearance would be attractive to an artist's eye. The clearing of the land, at that day, was a slow process, accomplished with few laborers and poor implements, while, to add to the difficulty, heavy timber had to be felled and removed; yet these people soon began to write to their friends at home of the prolific soil, the favorable climate, and the plenty that pervaded the land.

With all such flattering accounts, however, it is to be supposed that much of the means for the comfort and sustenance of the first settlers was derived from the forest and streams that teemed with game and fish of many kinds, which kept the wolf from the door in more than a single sense.

An incident that occurred during the career of Robert Zane, showing the care with which the Society of Friends regarded the disputes among their members, and how much scandal was avoided by the settlement of such troubles within the pale of the church, may be noticed here.

John White, a resident of Newton, died, leaving his brother Joseph, William Bates, Thomas Thackara and Robert Zane, executors of his will. The property which he left to be managed by his executors for the benefit of his children, was, for those times, considerable. In the progress of the settlement, a difficulty arose between Joseph White and the other executors, which found its way into both the Newton and the Salem Meeting, causing much discussion and ill feeling. A committee of six members from each meeting was appointed to settle the matter. This committee met at the house of Thomas Gard-

iner, Jr., at Woodbury creek, to hear what could be said by each party. A conclusion was reached, and an award signed by eleven of the committee, Richard Darkin of the Salem Meeting dissenting. This award was laid before the Salem Meeting upon the 26th day of the eighth month, 1691, and by it approved. Joseph White appealed to the Quarterly Meeting, which confirmed the act of the Monthly Meeting. In these proceedings, Richard Darkin gave his reasons for not signing the award, which were considered by each meeting in its review of the same. In regular order, the parties took the matter to the Yearly Meeting, held at Burlington, and, on the 29th day of the second month, 1693, Richard Darkin on the one part, and Thomas Sharp, one of the signers of the award, on the other part, were heard by Francis Davenport, Alexander Brearley, Samuel Carpenter and James Fox, the committee appointed by the meeting. After due consideration, the meeting confirmed the award aforesaid in all things. Much dissatisfaction still existed, but, on the 24th day of the fourth month, 1695, the decision of the committee of the Yearly Meeting was reported to the Salem Meeting, and the controversy abandoned so far as regarded the trouble among the executors.

John Hugg subsequently became the guardian of William White, son of the said John White. He also fell into difficulty with Joseph White, the contentious executor, about the payment of money due the ward, which was in his hands. In 1698, the guardian made complaint to the Salem Meeting of this default, and, in the next year, Edward Shippen, Anthony Morris and Isaac Norris were appointed a committee to adjust the same. This committee reported against Joseph White. In 1703, the matter makes its appearance again at the Yearly Meeting in Salem. At this meeting Joseph White is rebuked for his neglect in the premises. In the twelfth month of that year, however, he appeared before the meeting at Salem, and showed that a settlement had been made between himself and William White, thus putting an end to this tedious controversy.

Robert Zane's will was executed in 1694, the year in which he departed this life. This paper is a ragged, damp-stained

manuscript, in the files of the office of the Secretary of State, where it has probably escaped the eyes of searchers, for a century past. It contains much valuable information about his real estate, and also gives some facts concerning his family. Elizabeth, a second wife and mother of several of his children, was made executrix. She died in 1700, before a settlement of the estate was effected.<sup>11</sup> She was a daughter of Henry Willis, of Hempstead, Long Island, who was appointed by the court to close up the executrix's accounts. The posthumous child, as named in his will, was a daughter, and was called Rachel.

Nothing appears upon the papers to show who were the children of the first wife, so that the native blood can be traced to the later generations of the family. They were Nathaniel, who married Grace Rakestraw,<sup>9</sup> of Philadelphia, in 1697; Robert, who married Jane ———; Elnathan, who married ——— ———; Simeon, who died without children; Mary, Esther and Sarah. Nathaniel died in 1727; his children were Joseph, Jonathan, Ebenezer, Isaac, William, Margaret, Abigail and Hannah.<sup>12</sup>

Robert deceased in 1744; his children were Robert, who married Mary Chattin; Joseph; William; Simeon, who married Sarah Hooten; Isaac, who married Asuba Wilkins; Rebecca, Rachel, Elizabeth, Esther; and Sarah, who married James Whitall.<sup>12-14</sup>

Elnathan died in 1732. He was a shoemaker, and resided in Haddonfield. In 1703, he, Elnathan, sold 127 acres of land to John Fisher, the same being part of the estate owned by his father, lying next to Cooper's creek. John Fisher sold to Arthur Powell in 1716, who conveyed to William Cooper, of Philadelphia, in 1730.<sup>14</sup> The same property passed through a branch of the Burroughs family to Amos Haines, who, in 1804, devised it to his son Amos. Two of the children of Elnathan Zane, Nathaniel and Elnathan, also lived in the same place; the last named of whom married Bathsaba Hartley, in 1761, a daughter of Roger and Rebecca Hartley,

<sup>11</sup> Gloucester files, 1700.  
<sup>12</sup> Lib. No. 2, 510.

<sup>13</sup> Lib. AB, 152.  
<sup>14</sup> Lib. No. 3, 128. Lib. K, 1.

and half-sister to Mathias Aspden. This person was a son, by a second marriage, of the widow of Roger Hartley with Mathias Aspden, in 1756. As a shipping merchant, he accumulated a large estate and, upon the breaking out of the Revolutionary war, sympathized with the Crown and removed to England. In 1779, he was attainted of treason, and his property sold. In 1786, the attainder was removed, and damage awarded for the waste of his estate. He never married, and died in London, August 9, 1824. His estate followed the direction of a will made by him in 1791, and went *to his heirs at law*.<sup>15</sup> These few words occupied the courts for more than twenty years, at an expense of thousands of dollars; the English heirs being claimants on the father's side, and the American, being claimants in the maternal line. In 1833, Judge Baldwin decided in favor of the first named. An appeal was taken, and a new trial granted. In 1848, the verdict of a jury, before Judge Grier, in Philadelphia, was in favor of the American claimants, which virtually put an end to the suit. The estate amounted to \$600,000, and was distributed accordingly.

It will be seen that the male branch predominated in the Zane family; but many of them, having a spirit of unrest, incident to the blood in the maternal line, wandered into the West, far beyond the line of civilization, and the original estate passed out of the name in a few decades after the death of the first owner. By his, Robert's, will, one-third of the estate went to his son Nathaniel, and the same proportion to his son Robert. Nathaniel died in 1727, and devised his part to his son Joseph, who also bought his uncle Robert's share in 1740. Joseph deceased in 1759, and gave this estate to two of his children,—Esther, wife of Richard Collings, and Rhoda, wife of Thomas Heppard.<sup>16</sup> The last named sold the undivided half-part to Richard Collings, in 1762, whereby the latter became owner of the original estate, as before named.<sup>17</sup> A portion of the same is still held in the family; but much the larger part has passed to other owners.<sup>18</sup>

This Richard Collings (who was one of the descendants of Francis Collins), on account of the numerous family of that

<sup>15</sup> Supreme Court of the United States, No. 160. <sup>17</sup> Lib. W., 59, O. S. G.

<sup>16</sup> Lib. No. 9, 238.

<sup>18</sup> Lib. B, 316, Gloucester Records.

name in this region, and for the purpose of distinction, changed the spelling of his name, by introducing the letter *g*; this has led to some confusion in genealogy; yet the tradition is generally accepted, and is looked upon as correct.

James Whitall, who married Sarah, one of the daughters of the second Robert Zane, settled on a farm which he purchased of Samuel Shivers, in 1725. This property fronted Cooper's creek, in Haddon township, and was formerly known as the "Ann Burr Farm." James Whitall must have died a few years after, for, in 1729, his executors sold the same to John Eastlack. In 1742, it became part of the estate of Elizabeth Estaugh (by her husband's will), who deceded it to her nephew, Ebenezer Hopkins, in 1752; one of whose children was the before-named Ann Burr.

Isaac Zane, a grandson of the second Robert, in his wanderings among the early settlers of the Western States, was captured by the Indians, and remained with them for many years. The contradictory statements made in regard to this person have lead to much doubt as to the truth of the story; and, with some, he is placed in a different family and connected with a different history. DeHass, in his history of the Indian wars of Western Virginia, published in 1851, says that the family is of Danish origin, that it first moved to France, thence to England, and finally emigrated to America; and that one branch settled in New Jersey, nearly opposite to Philadelphia, and the other in Virginia. From the Virginia branch, this historian traces the pioneers of the Western wilds, and places Ebenezer Zane at the head of these brave men. His first cabin was built where the city of Wheeling now stands, and there he erected a stockade for the protection of his family, in 1777. He was employed by the United States government in various positions of trust and responsibility, and always discharged his duties to satisfaction. From this man the name and family have become numerous in Western Virginia. He died in 1811.<sup>19</sup>

Reference is made to Jonathan and Silas Zane, brothers of Ebenezer, who were his companions in arms against the Indians. Jonathan was considered the most expert hunter in

<sup>19</sup> DeHass's History of Indian Wars in Western Virginia, 331.

his day, and often aided in the capacity of a spy in the troubles with the red men. Reference is also made to Isaac Zane, who, the account says, was captured when about nine years of age, and, becoming thoroughly Indian in habits and appearance, married the sister of a Wyandotte chief. By her he acquired a large landed estate, and had a family of eight children. He remained true to the whites, and, by timely information, saved them from many bloody visitations. In consideration of these services, the government granted him ten thousand acres of land on Mad river.

The remarkable coincidence of Christian names in this narrative with those of the descendants of the first-comer to Newton, would suggest some error on the part of DeHass in fixing the location of their settlement, and would lead to the supposition that he had been misinformed in this respect.

Letters and other memoranda now in possession of the family in this part of our State, place the identity of Isaac beyond a question. In 1798, an account of his captivity, marriage and position among the Indians, was published, and a visit which he made to his friends and relatives about Newton, goes to show that he was of the New Jersey family, and that Robert Zane was his ancestor.<sup>20</sup>

The family is numerous in most of the Western States; it has sprung from the hardy, brave men whose love of adventure and fondness for the solitude of the wilderness, kept them in advance of civilization. About the old homestead plantation, no one bearing the name has owned any of the soil for many years; and, but for the titles and traditions that are inseparably connected therewith, they would have long since been forgotten.

<sup>20</sup> Family Papers.