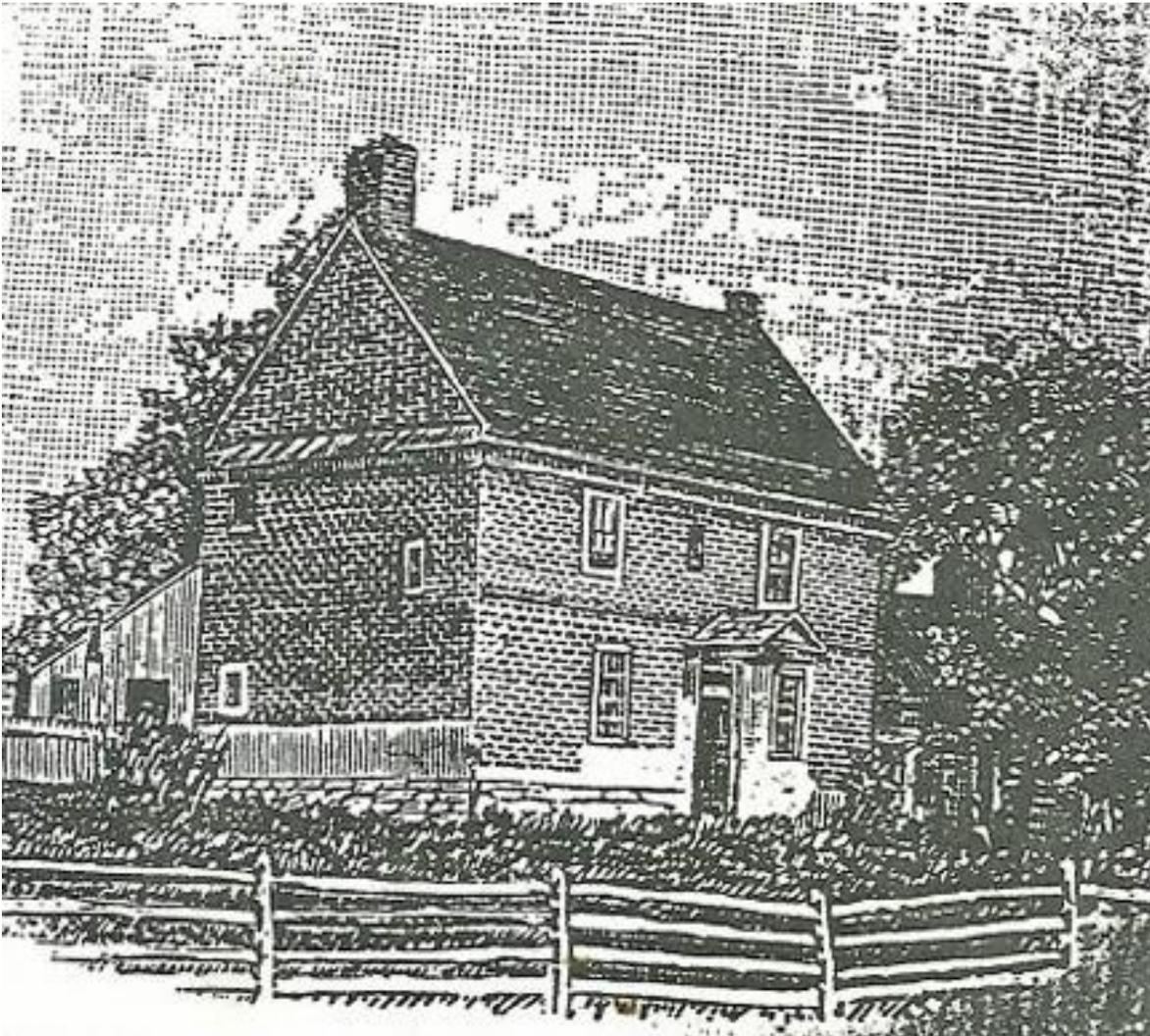


**A Brief History  
of  
Abiah Taylor, Jr.**

Born on 18 Apr 1675 in Didcot, Berkshire, England

Died on 10 Oct 1747 in East Bradford, Chester, Pennsylvania



Franklin Pierce Mason II

# Abiah Taylor, Jr.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Franklin P. Mason II, Spring 2022

Abiah Taylor, Jr. was born in Didcot, Berkshire, England on 18 Apr 1675. He was the son of Abiah Taylor, Sr.,<sup>4</sup> (1636-1699) and Alice [ ] (1640-1710). Abiah Taylor, Sr., and Alice were married on 17 January 1663 in Didcot.

Abiah, Jr. married Deborah Gearing on 18 April 1694, at Faringdon Meeting in Faringdon, Berkshire, England. Deborah was the daughter of John and Margaret Gearing of Stanford in the Vale in Berkshire. Deborah Gearing was born 01 Aug 1671 in Berkshire.

Abiah Taylor, Jr., and Deborah Gearing had the following (known) children:

Ann Taylor, b. 1696, d. 1728, m. 1715 Richard Barnard<sup>5</sup>

Abiah Taylor, d. unmarried

Alice Taylor, b. 1711, d. 1795, m. 17 Jan 1731 Daniel Hoopes

Deborah Taylor, b. ca. 1710, d. 1783, m. 29 Apr 1731 Jonathan Parke<sup>6</sup>

Samuel Taylor, b. 1715, d. Mar 1759, m. 1737 Mary Smedley, second 1741 Deborah Darlington

One account of Abiah Taylor, Jr. is provided by Futhey and Cope on page 164 in their *History of Chester Co., Pennsylvania*:

Abiah Taylor settled on the Brandywine in 1702, and built a mill on a branch of this stream which flowed by his dwelling, the site of which is still used for the same purpose. In 1724 he built a brick house on a mound by the run which empties into the Brandywine a little south of the Strasburg road. It has been frequently said that the bricks were brought from England, but this is not correct. They were made on the farm, from clay procured a short distance south of the home. The window sashes were made of lead, and the lights were small. It is still standing, and is known throughout the neighborhood as "the old brick house." It can be readily seen from the Strasburg road as the traveler passes between the old Black Horse tavern and Cope's bridge over the Brandywine. It is on the creek road leading south from the Strasburg road. In its day it must have been considered one of the finest houses in the county. In 1706 he took up 200 acres on what has been called Taylor's Run, and this he gave to his daughter, Deborah Parke, and her children. Another tract of equal size he took up in 1715, and this passed to the family of his daughter, Alice Hoopes. This now forms the farms of Watson J. Ambler, Simeon Hoopes, and Benjamin Few. John Cope purchased, and in 1712 settled on, 200 acres of land on Taylor's Run, and next to the Goshen Line. The valley through which this stream flows was named the "Vale of Avoca" by the late Dr. William Darlington. On the east side of the Brandywine, north of the Strasburg road, 500 acres were located in right of ten servants. A

---

<sup>1</sup> A most wonderful reference on Abiah Taylor and allied families is as follows: *Thomas Parke and Rebecca Hooper of Chester County Pennsylvania, with information on Abiah Taylor, Richard Woodward, Robert Pyle, Aaron Bullock, John Hannum, and John Chalfant*, Ernestine Parke Moss, April 1982, 658 Stonewall Street, Memphis, Tenn. 38107

<sup>2</sup> *History of Chester County, Pennsylvania, with genealogical and biographical sketches*, J. Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, L. H. Everts, Philadelphia, 1881, pp. 164 and 737-38.

<sup>3</sup> *Genealogy of the Darlington Family 1580-1900*, Gilbert Cope, Committee for the Family, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1900

<sup>4</sup> For more on Abiah Taylor, Sr., refer to the Appendix.

<sup>5</sup> Refer to: <https://www.wayneandsandy.com/getperson.php?personID=P876&tree=001>

<sup>6</sup> For more on Deborah Taylor and Jonathan Parke, refer to the Appendix.

large part of it was purchased in 1761 by Abiah Taylor, grandson of the settler, and who built thereon in 1768 the substantial stone house now the residence of Robert L. Hayes.<sup>7</sup>

Another account of Abiah Taylor, Jr., is provided by *Biographical Sketch of Abiah Taylor (Arrived in Pennsylvania 1701)*:<sup>8</sup>

Abiah Taylor, yeoman, son of Abiah Taylor, of Didcot, in Berkshire, and Deborah Gearing, spinster, daughter of John Gearing, of Stanford in the Vale, in the same county, were married at Farringdon in the County of Berks, aforesaid, on the 18th of the Second Month, called April 1694. The bride signed her maiden name to the certificate of marriage. Tradition says that Abiah Taylor Jr., made some voyages to Virginia for tobacco, prior to his settlement in Pennsylvania.

Deeds of lease and release, dated March 4 and 5, 1701, between John Toovey, of Henley upon Thames, Oxford, citizen and grocer, of London, and Abiah Taylor, of Harwell in Berks, mercer, show that Abiah Taylor, having a reversionary interest in the estate of Joane Dew, consisting of a messuage or tenement in Stanford in the Vale, heretofore in the possession of Thomas Langley, and John Toovey, having 1250 acres of land in Pennsylvania, they made an exchange. Abiah Taylor arrived here in 1702, and obtained a warrant, dated 1-19-1702/3, to take up 500 acres in Chester County. Another warrant was granted 2-6-1703, for 475 acres, the remainder of Toovey's purchase after deducting 25 acres for "Liberty Land" in Philadelphia. He had perhaps sold 250 acres unlocated, or otherwise obtained a warrant for that amount which has not been noticed.

In pursuance of the above a tract of 430 acres was laid out in what is now East Bradford township, through which the east branch of the Brandywine flows, from a little above "Deborah's Rocks" to a point about a mile and one-eighth below. Near the upper end of this, on a pretty mound, Abiah Taylor erected, in 1724, a brick house which is still standing with its quaint narrow windows, which formerly contained lead sash and small panes of glass. A branch of the Brandywine, from the eastward, flows close by and has been known as Taylor's Run, but recently the name of Lady Creek has become more popular. Abiah Taylor erected a mill upon this as early as 1722, of which the ruins only remain. His brother Joseph came from England in 1708, and built a mill on Pocopson Creek about 1724.

Abiah and Deborah Taylor had children: Ann, who m. Richard Barnard; Abiah, who died unmarried; Alice, m. to Daniel Hoopes Jr.; Deborah, m. to Jonathan Parke, and Samuel. The father died about October 1747, and Samuel inherited the homestead, which by his will, dated 1-24-1759, he directed to be divided between his sons.

Abiah Taylor, Jr., died on 10 Oct 1747 in East Bradford, Chester, Pennsylvania.

Deborah Gearing Taylor died after 1741, when she and Abiah deeded property to their son, Samuel.<sup>9</sup> The evidence says that she died before her husband did. She died in East Bradford, Chester, Pennsylvania.

---

<sup>7</sup> *History of Chester County, Pennsylvania, with genealogical and biographical sketches*, J. Smith Futney and Gilbert Cope, L. H. Everts, Philadelphia, 1881, p 164

<sup>8</sup> [files.usgwarchives.net/pa/chester/bios/t/taylor-a.txt](http://files.usgwarchives.net/pa/chester/bios/t/taylor-a.txt), which was contributed for use in USGenWeb Archives by Lew <[smedley.george@att.net](mailto:smedley.george@att.net)>

<sup>9</sup> *Genealogy of the Darlington Family 1580-1900*, Gilbert Cope, Committee for the Family, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1900, p. 82

## Appendix

### The House of Abiah Taylor, Jr.

In 1724 Abiah Taylor, Jr., built a brick house on a mound by the creek that empties into the Brandywine River a little south of the Strasburg Road. The window sashes were made of lead, and the lights were small. It is still standing. In its heyday, it was known throughout the neighborhood as "the old brick house." And at that time, it must have been considered one of the finest houses in the county.

The Abiah Taylor House is part of the Taylor-Cope Historic District.<sup>10</sup> Information on this house is held by the Library of Congress.<sup>11</sup>



The Abiah Taylor House

---

<sup>10</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taylor-Cope\\_Historic\\_District](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taylor-Cope_Historic_District). In 1987, the Taylor-Cope Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the United States of America. Its reference number is 87001250.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.loc.gov/item/pa0261/>

The Abiah Taylor House was restored (and expanded) in about 2018 by John Milner Architects. <sup>12</sup>



The Abiah Taylor House, after restoration and expansion

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://johnmilnerarchitects.com/portfolio/country-homes/abiah-taylor-house/> and <https://www.finehomebuilding.com/2018/11/02/houses-design-restoring-abiah-taylor-house>

## The Barn of Abiah Taylor, Jr.

The Abiah Taylor barn is believed to be the oldest extant barn in Chester County. It was (probably) built the same year as the house—1724.

The barn is part of the Taylor-Cope Historic District, as is the house. And the barn is now part of the Stroud Preserve.<sup>13</sup>



The Abiah Taylor Barn

---

<sup>13</sup> [www.aseymour.com/2011/05/01/nature-walk-at-stroud-preserve/](http://www.aseymour.com/2011/05/01/nature-walk-at-stroud-preserve/)

The following essay was written by R. Thomas Berner, “The Spectator”.<sup>14</sup>

The state’s oldest barn can be found in Chester County. It has been there, according to research, since 1753. There is a gable stone that says 1724, but the owner believes that comes from a barn that previously occupied the site and was incorporated into the new barn. The date stone in the brick farm house says 1724.

Unlike most barns that survive today in Pennsylvania, this one is a one-level barn or a ground barn. And unlike most barns in Pennsylvania, this one is of English ancestry rather than German. And the owners, Wynne and John Milner, keep Sicilian donkeys as pets.

A tornado heavily damaged one side wall and the roof and that required major repair. The owner managed to salvage some of the original rafters and shows them to visitors. The rebuilt wall faces the road and contains a single door. Its opposite side has two single doors while the wide sides of the barn have double doors, which are built to accommodate wagons. The inside has lofts on both sides which are accessible by portable ladders. Typically, in the German barns, ladders were built in as part of the internal structure.

Primary ventilation is provided on all sides by slits in the stone walls that are narrow on the outside and wider inside, reminiscent of a design found in military forts and castles.

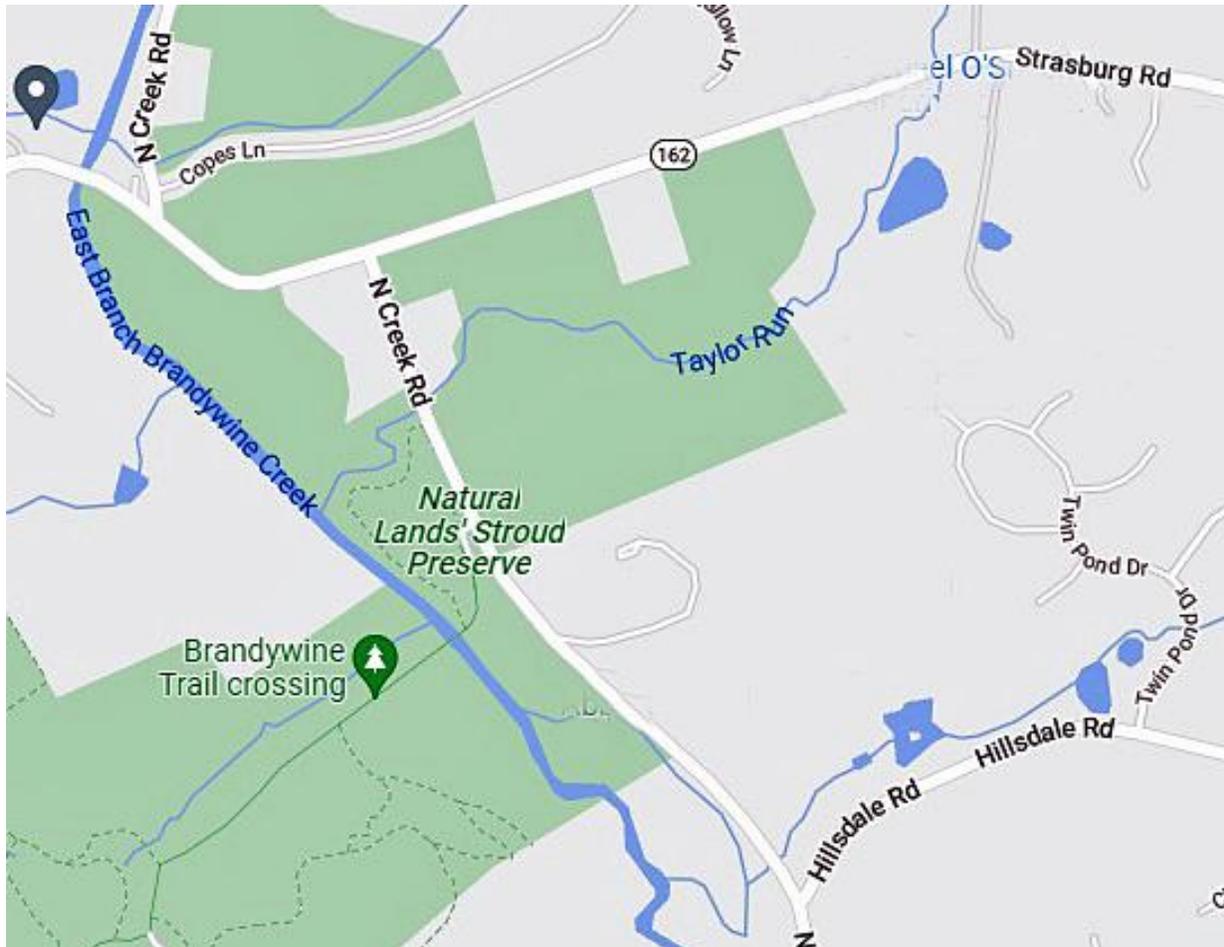
According to Gregory D. Huber, a barn historian, remnants of older barns exist around the state, but not in the condition of this one. Huber determined the date of the current barn by testing one of the original rafters, using a process called dendro-dating. Think tree rings.

---

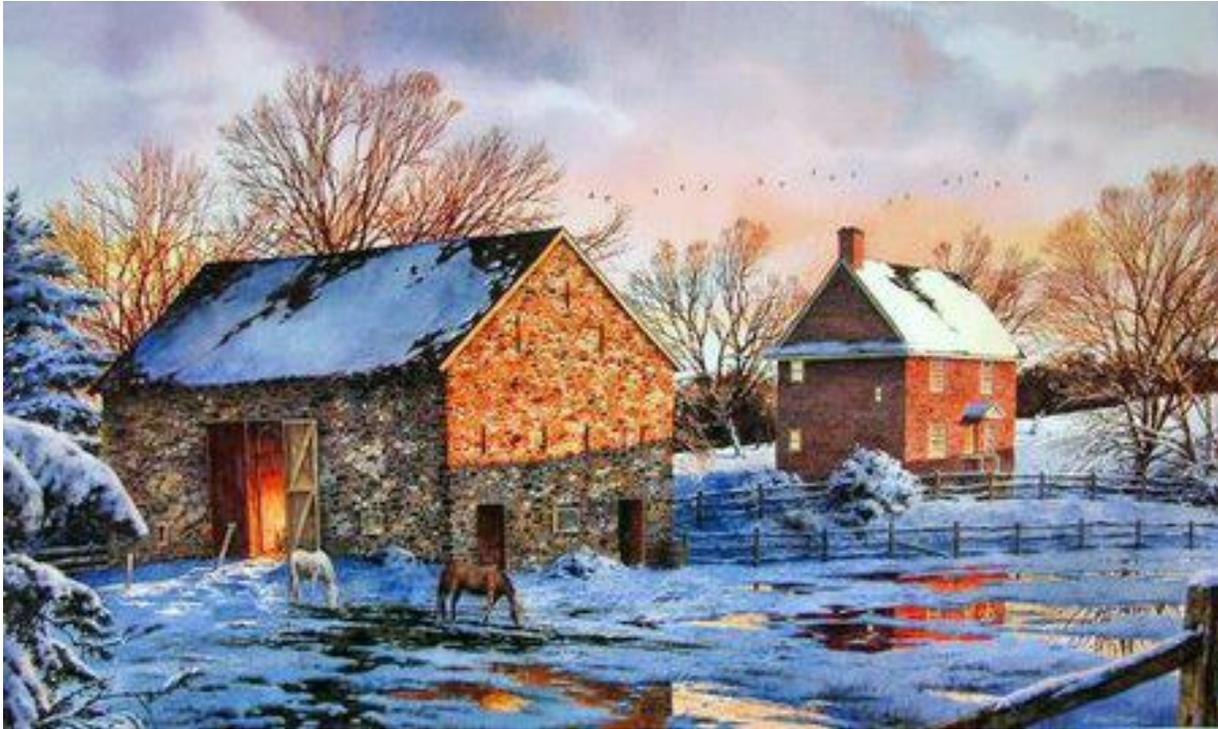
<sup>14</sup> [rtberner.blogspot.com/2012/08/the-states-oldest-barn.html](http://rtberner.blogspot.com/2012/08/the-states-oldest-barn.html)

## Taylor's Run

Taylor's Run (sometimes called "Lady Creek" or "Taylor Run") is a creek that empties into the East Branch of the Brandywine River a little south of the Strasburg Road. Near the upper end of this creek, on a "pretty mound," Abiah Taylor, in 1724, erected his house and barn. Abiah Taylor erected a mill upon this creek as early as 1722, of which only the ruins remain.



Taylor's Run



“Taylor’s Run” by Richard Bollinger

“Every purchaser and adventurer shall, by lot, have so much land ...” That declaration made by William Penn in 1681 was followed one year later by the appointment of Pennsylvania's first three counties - Chester, Bucks, and Philadelphia. That was just the encouragement those early adventurers needed in settling this new colony. They were mostly ordinary men—merchants, shopkeepers, craftsmen, and farmers. They were all seeking a new way in this new world. Colonist Abiah Taylor was one of those adventurers. In 1702, he obtained property along the west branch of the Brandywine River and in 1724, built the classic brick home pictured above. Several years later, Taylor established a mill along the banks of the river and soon the tributary became known as *Taylor's Run*.

In this work, Richard Bollinger has captured Chester County's oldest existing brick home bathed in the wonderful glow of evening light. The dramatic landscape portrays this historic landmark as it may have appeared centuries ago. His ability to create vignettes of rural life in America has won a warm place in the hearts of art collectors across the country.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> [www.richardbollinger.net/closeup/taylorsrun\\_large.htm](http://www.richardbollinger.net/closeup/taylorsrun_large.htm)



"Taylor's Run" by Richard Chalfant, b. 1953

A native of Chester County, Richard Chalfant has spent his life studying the landscape and history of his homeland. His paintings are now becoming a record of a world soon to be lost due to the relentless suburbanization of the region. Largely because of its beauty the Brandywine Valley has attracted and produced an important number of painters over several hundred years. Richard is part of a family tradition of native artists which included Jefferson David Chalfant, George Cope, and Howard Pyle.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> [www.hlchalfant.com/artists/richard-chalfant](http://www.hlchalfant.com/artists/richard-chalfant)

## **John Taylor, Father of Abiah Taylor, Sr.**

John Taylor was the father of Abiah Taylor, Sr. Apparently, Abiah Taylor, Sr., was a bit of a renegade. The following was written of Abiah Taylor, Sr., in *The Long Years of Obscurity-- A History of Didcot*, Volume I to 1841, Brian Lingham, Gem Graphic Services, Didcot, 1978 [posted on thor205 site (rootsweb)]

Father John must have been passionately devoted to the children of his later years and on his deathbed (he died in 1677) dictated a new will, leaving his entire estate to John and 15 pounds to Mary. The two older children, Abiah and Anne, now adults, were cut out of their inheritance with only a shilling apiece. Though it is not known why Anne was treated this way, Abiah is a different case. He was an irreligious man in a puritanical age, one of intense religious feeling. Abiah was presented several times for non-observance of the religious laws by the churchwardens, of whom John Taylor was one. His son failed to attend church, and was excommunicated in 1671. So it is easy to understand why Abiah was cut out of his father's will. The Archdeaconal Court found that the old man was lucid and rational at the time of his death as Abiah had contested the validity of the will. Anyway, judgment was given against him, after which he subsequently moved from Didcot.

## Deborah Taylor and Jonathan Parke

The marriage of Deborah Taylor and Jonathan Parke united two of the most famous families of early Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Jonathan Parke married, 2,29,1731, Deborah, daughter of Abiah and Deborah Taylor, of East Bradford, and settled on 200 acres of land which her father conveyed to them. He also owned land in the southeast part of the borough of Downingtown, and is said to have built a substantial stone house, now near the toll-gate. His son Abiah lived on this last property and may have built the house. The children of Jonathan and Deborah were Joseph, Deborah, m to Samuel Cope; Abiah, m to Ruth Jones; Rebecca, m to James Webb, Jr.; Alice, m to Col. John Hannum; Jonathan, m to Jane Buchanan; and Mary.<sup>17</sup>

AN OLD MARRIAGE CONTRACT: We were shown the other day, the copy of a marriage certificate—dated “the 29th. day of the 2nd. month, 1731”—153 years old which is now in the possession of Caleb H. Bradley, of West Chester. The contracting parties, as the contract reads, were Jonathan Parke, son of Thomas Parke of East Cain, and Deborah Taylor, daughter of Abiah Taylor of Bradford, recorded in the Monthly Meeting book of Chichester and Concord. Second month at that time was April. The contract is written on parchment and is signed by 67 persons who were present at the wedding. Among the signers we notice the names of Cope (then spelled Coope), Barnard, Hoopes, Mendenhall, Brinton, Pim, Gibbons, Townsend, Taylor, Parke, Peirce, etc. One of the signers was Alice Hoopes, formerly Alice Taylor, and a sister of Deborah. Jonathan and Deborah Parke, the two here united, were the grandparents of Caleb H. Bradley and Caleb H. Kinnard, both gentlemen still living in West Chester, and also the great-grandparents of Jonathan Parke, now over 80 years of age of Urbana, Ohio, Champaign County, as well as the great-grandparents of nearly all the Chester County Copes and their descendants. Jonathan Parke, of East Bradford Township, who died in 1830, at the advanced age of between 99 and 100 years, was the oldest son of Jonathan and Deborah Parke. The Taylors are descendants of Abiah Taylor who built and lived in the old Revolutionary house still standing along the Brandywine, in East Bradford, a little south of the Strasburg Road. The document is in very excellent condition and is highly valued as an old family roll.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> *History of Chester County, Pennsylvania, with genealogical and biographical sketches*, J. Smith Futhey and Gilbert Cope, L. H. Everts, Philadelphia, 1881, p. 164

<sup>18</sup> *West Chester Local News*, 7.11.1884