

A SHORT ACCOUNT Of The PARKE FAMILY

This account of the Parke family was compiled by the late John Biddle (deceased October 19, 1884), from a fuller account contained in two MSS., written between the years 1824 and 1840, by the late James P. Parke.

With some additional matter afterwards discovered, and a few immaterial changes, it is here given as originally written.

It was thought desirable to preserve the record.

James P. Parke states: "Of my own immediate ancestry the earliest memorandum I have gives information of Thomas Parke, a member of the Society of Friends, then in Ireland as a resident; but whether his progenitors had come from England is uncertain. He appears probably to have been a farmer, and in the year 1720 owned some land in Ballilean, Ballaughmore, and Collisnacktah." The family consisted of said Thomas Parke and Rebecca, his wife (whose maiden name J. P. Parke "presumes" was Hooper), and ten children, below named, of whom nine were then living.

1. MARY, born July 18, 1693, who had married Thomas Valentine.

2. ROBERT, born January 23, 1695, who in 1720 and 1721 appears to have been a storekeeper in Dublin.

3. SUSANNA, born October 22, 1696; whether she ever married, J. P. P. could never ascertain.

4. REBECCA, born November 22, 1698-99, who had married Hugh Stalker.

5. RACHEL, born October 26, 1700, who afterwards married John Robinson.

6. JEAN, born February 6, 1703, died February 12, 1705, and was buried in Friends' burial ground at Ballikealy.

7. THOMAS, born January 13, 1704-5, who after his arrival in Pennsylvania married Jane Edge.

8. ABEL, born December 22, 1706, who had married Deborah —.

9. JONATHAN, born February 18, 1709, who afterwards married a Bradford Township, Chester County, girl, Deborah Taylor.

10. ELIZABETH, born August 5, 1710, who subsequently married John Jackson.

What induced the family to remove to America, J. P. Parke could not ascertain. He could find no record of any particular persecutions, nor any indications of poverty. Whatever the motive, all of the family above named, excepting Mary, the first, and Susanna, the third child, on May 21, 1724, embarked at Dublin on the ship "Sizargh," of Whitehaven, Jeremiah Cowman, commander, bound to Whitehaven and thence to Philadelphia, having on board ninety-four passengers.

The ages of the two parents and their seven children, who thus embarked, are given at said date of embarkation as follows:

Parents:

Thomas Parke, aged 64.

Rebecca, his wife, aged 52.

Children:

Robert Parke, aged 29.

Rebecca Stalker, aged 25, with her husband, Hugh Stalker.

Rachel Parke, aged 24.

Thomas Parke, aged 19.

Abel Parke, aged 17, with his wife, Deborah.

Jonathan Parke, aged 15.

Elizabeth Parke, aged 13.

After a rough passage they arrived in Delaware Bay, August 21, 1724. The family remained in Chester about three months after landing, and then removed to a temporary residence about two miles therefrom; part of the family traveling, during most of this time, in search of land to purchase. On December 30, 1725, Thomas Parke purchased from Thomas Lindley a tract of land in the Great Valley, in the township of East Caln, consisting of five hundred (500) acres (twenty of which were then cleared), with a log house erected thereon, for the sum of three hundred and fifty pounds.

In the month of May, 1726, the family removed from Chester Township to their new homestead. The land thus purchased by Thomas Parke is beautifully situated, on the great road leading from

Philadelphia to the West. Of the five hundred acres in the tract, Thomas Parke gave to his son, Robert, one hundred and twenty-four acres, on which there was one of the largest springs in the county; to his son, Thomas, two hundred and seventy-six acres, reserving there-out a maintenance for himself and wife; and to his son, Abel, the remaining one hundred acres.

The daughter, Mary, with her husband, Thomas Valentine, and their family, came to America to reside some time prior to 1735, but the daughter Susanna still continued to reside in Ireland, where she probably died unmarried.

The following extract from the minutes of Bradford Monthly Meeting confirms the statement that "the character of Thomas Parke the elder was held in high estimation among his neighbors."

"Thomas Parke came from Ireland about the year 1724, well recommended by certificate from Friends there, and some years after he was appointed an Elder for Caln meeting, in which station he remained until near his death, and was well respected by Friends in general. He departed this life the 31st of the 1st month, 1738, and was buried at Caln."

He attained the age of seventy-seven and one-half years. His widow survived him nearly twelve years, having attained the age of seventy-seven years at the time of her decease.

The one hundred and twenty-four acres of the aforesaid tract of land which Thomas Parke the elder gave to his son Robert were subsequently purchased by the son Abel (who thus became the owner of two hundred and twenty-four acres); and at a still later date Abel sold his two hundred and twenty-four acres to his brother Thomas, who thus became possessed of the whole of the tract of five hundred acres originally purchased by his father, Thomas Parke the elder.

ROBERT PARKE (the second child of Thomas Parke the elder) died unmarried, February 9, 1736-37, in the forty-second year of his age.

THOMAS PARKE, second (the seventh child of Thomas Parke the elder), on April 26, 1739, at the age of thirty-four years, married Jane Edge, then twenty-four years of age. They had seven children, below named. He carried on the business of farming, and died October 17, 1758, aged fifty-three years. Five years after the death of Thomas Parke the second, his widow, Jane, married James Webb, she being his third wife. They had no issue. The children of Thomas Parke the second, and Jane, his wife, were:

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| 1. Robert. | 3. Rebecca. | 6. Jane. |
| 2. Sarah. | 4. Hannah. | 7. Jacob. |
| | 5. Thomas. | |

Of the remaining brothers and sisters of Thomas Parke the second, and their families, J. P. Parke has little or nothing of special interest in his "Short Account of the Parke Family." He states as follows: "Of the children of Mary Valentine (the first child of Thomas Parke the elder), one named Robert, born in Ireland, was a minister of the gospel of the Society of Friends, and in the year 1781 visited England and Ireland in that service, and of *his* children the daughters married into the families of Malin, Sharpless, and Massey; and the sons into those of Ashbridge and Bond."

Many of the descendants of Rebecca Stalker (the fourth child of Thomas Parke the elder) yet live in Chester County.

Of the descendants of Rachel Robinson (the fifth child of Thomas Parke the elder) nothing is known excepting that such descendants existed. It is, however, known that said Rachel and her husband, "a sorry fellow," settled in White Marsh Township.

ABEL PARKE (the eighth child of Thomas Parke the elder) died in the month of July, 1757, aged fifty years. His issue is probably extinct, by the death of his only son, Thomas, unmarried.

Many of the descendants of JONATHAN PARKE (the ninth child of Thomas Parke the elder) are yet living in the vicinity of Downingtown, formerly called Downington, a village so named by the family of Downing, although one-half of the land on which it stands belonged to the Parke family.

ELIZABETH JACKSON (the tenth child of Thomas Parke the elder) married John Jackson, a person of very humble social position. They had three children, of whom nothing of interest is known. She died April 16, 1746, aged thirty-four and one-half years.

Of the children of THOMAS PARKE THE SECOND, and Jane, his wife:

ROBERT PARKE, the first child, inherited by his father's will the northern section of the tract of five hundred acres and a handsome stone residence thereon erected by his father a very short time prior to his decease. When thirty years of age he married, at East Caln, October 18, 1770, Ann Edge, aged twenty-two years. He died, October 14, 1773, leaving a son and daughter. The son married, and his descendants yet (qu. 1835?) occupy the farm.

SARAH (the second child of Thomas Parke the second), who was born March 29, 1742, when eighteen years of age married, at East Caln, September 29, 1760, Owen Biddle, of Philadelphia. From a manuscript

by her husband with reference to her last illness, and decease, we take the following: "She had long labored under a sore disorder which at times had nearly brought her to the grave." In the year 1793 she, as well as several others of her family, suffered from an attack of yellow fever, from which she recovered, but her eldest daughter, Jane, died September 28, 1793. This attack of fever and her trials at that time gave a shock to her tender frame which made it an easy prey to her old disorder—"an asthmatic complaint, attended with chills and fever." In the month of March, 1794, she had a return of this old disorder, from which she suffered for five or six weeks, and was then so far restored to health as to be able to take short drives.

In compliance with her own desire, and with the approval of her brother, Dr. Thomas Parke, she left her home about the 1st of August, with the intention of paying a visit to her sister, Rebecca Webb, near Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Accompanied by her son John, she travelled by very easy stages as far as the Great Valley, where she stopped to spend a few days with her relatives in that region. Here, while at the residence of her nephew, Thomas Parke (son of her brother, Robert), she was again attacked with "violent chills and fever," which, in a very few days, resulted in her decease, on the 16th day of August, 1794, at the age of fifty-two years. In her last hours she was attended by her husband, her daughters, Sarah and Rebecca Owen Biddle, and her son, John. Referring to these closing hours, her husband writes: "A sweet composure attended her mind the remainder of her time, and when she had occasion to mention any of her friends it was with expressions of love. Indeed, stronger marks of a mind at peace I never observed before. However great our loss may be, we have the consolation to believe it is her everlasting gain. 'Behold the perfect and the upright, the end of that man is peace'."

Her remains were interred at Friends' burial-ground at East Caln, Chester County, Pennsylvania, near the remains of her father, her child Robert, and other relations.

REBECCA (the third child of Thomas Parke the second), at thirty-eight years of age, married her step-brother, William Webb, who resided about a mile east of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. She died January 30, 1816, aged seventy-one years, leaving no issue.

HANNAH (the fourth child of Thomas Parke the second), at twenty years of age married, November 13, 1767, Benjamin Poultney. They resided for some time in Lancaster and afterwards removed to

Philadelphia, where she died, March 19, 1781, aged thirty-four years. There are numerous descendants of her now (1892) residing in the city of Philadelphia, of the names of Poultney, Williams, etc.

THOMAS (the fifth child of Thomas Parke the second), who was born August 6, 1749, O.S., and to whom the southern section of the aforesaid family tract of five hundred acres was bequeathed, directed his attention to the study of medicine, for which purpose he removed to Philadelphia, and pursued his studies under the supervision of Dr. Cadwallader Evans for three years. He took his degree of Bachelor of Medicine at the "College and Academy of Philadelphia" on June 5, 1770. In the year 1771 he visited Great Britain, where he attended first the lectures delivered at the Medical School of Edinburgh—then in the zenith of its strength—and afterwards the clinical practice of Guy's and St. Thomas's Hospital, London, returning to Philadelphia in 1773. Here he was promptly taken into partnership by his old instructor, Dr. Cadwallader Evans, who shortly thereafter died.

Dr. Parke, through a long life, evidenced decided ability in his profession, and, owing to his intelligence, sound judgment, and strict integrity, was honored and respected by his fellow-citizens. In 1777 he became a physician to the Pennsylvania Hospital; in 1787 he was one of the founders of the College of Physicians at Philadelphia, and its president from 1818 until his death; and was for fifty-seven years a director of the Philadelphia Library, and his portrait is now in their possession. On April 13, 1775, he married Rachel, the eldest daughter of James Pemberton, of Philadelphia. She died March 13, 1786. They had five children, two of whom died in early childhood. Of the three who survived their parents, Thomas, the oldest, devoted himself to the business of a supercargo in the East India trade, and died in September, 1840, aged sixty-four years; and Hannah and James P. Parke lived to quite an advanced age. None of them married. The MS. from which this is mainly compiled was written by the said James P. Parke. Dr. Parke died at Philadelphia, January 9, 1835, aged eighty-five years.

JANE (the sixth child of Thomas Parke the second) died in infancy.

JACOB (the seventh and last child of Thomas Parke the second) was an upright, worthy man, of humble disposition and moderate abilities. He was brought up to the business of blacksmithing, which he pursued until the year 1781, when he went into partnership with his brother-in-law, Benjamin Poultney, at Philadelphia, in the card-

making and ironmongery business. This partnership was dissolved before B. Poultney's death, and Jacob thereafter, until a few years before his decease, was engaged in the ironmongery business. He died unmarried, March 10, 1817, aged sixty-two years.

COPY OF THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF OWEN BIDDLE

I, Owen Biddle, of the City of Philadelphia, being of sound disposing mind and memory, though weak in body, do make and declare this to be and contain my last Will and Testament, viz :

It is my will that either of my children may take at an appraisement any article or articles of my moveable property that they may choose, excepting only those which I have hereinafter particularly specified and bequeathed.

I give and bequeath unto my daughter, Rebecca Owen Thomson, one of the two large Chests of Drawers—she taking her choice.

I give and bequeath unto my daughter, Anna Biddle, the other of the said Chests of Drawers, and the old family Bible in three volumes.

I give and bequeath unto my said daughters, Rebecca and Anna, equally to be divided between them, the sum of sixty-three pounds, which was due from the shop to their sister, my late daughter Sarah, and also all the wearing apparel of my late wife, and of my said daughter Sarah, deceased.

I give and bequeath to my son Owen my Clock and case thereto belonging.

I give and bequeath to my son Clement my Desk and Bookcase.

I give and bequeath to my son John one-half of the furniture of the Shop, and of such other articles, the property of the late co-partnership between him and me, as shall not have been previously divided between us ; I also give to my said son John the Still with its appurtenances.

I give and bequeath to Hannah Fairlamb the large old Watch which formerly belonged to her father.

I give and bequeath unto my Executors and the survivors and survivor of them, the sum of Fifty dollars, in trust, that they may pay the same to the Treasurer for the time being of the Institution established under the care of the Yearly Meeting of Friends for Pennsyl-