

## Alexander Parker.

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On page 306 of *The First Publishers of Truth* there is an interesting account of the introduction of Quakerism into the district known as "Bolland" in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and in connection therewith the name of Alexander Parker is mentioned.

An editorial footnote to *F.P.T.* stated that although abundant materials were extant, no account of this Friend had been published, but that a brief notice was given of him by John Whiting in his *Persecution Exposed*, 1715.

Alexander Parker's name is perhaps more frequently mentioned in George Fox's *Journal* than that of any other Friend, and he appears to have been one of George Fox's closest comrades, journeying with him on the Continent as well as throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain. Alexander Parker was also the writer of many Quaker books, and the list of his works in Joseph Smith's *Catalogue* occupies considerable space.

It seems strange, therefore, that no biography has ever been issued in book form.

In John Whiting's short sketch he says that Alexander Parker was "born in Yorkshire," but curiously adds, "near to Bolton in Lancashire"; this is a palpable error and one which is repeated by Joseph Smith.

It is evident that the small country town of Bolton-by-Bowland was much nearer Parker's birthplace than the larger manufacturing town of the same name in Lancashire.

Bolton-by-Bowland (or *Bolland*, as it is still generally pronounced) is in Yorkshire, though it lies close to the Lancashire boundary, and is near Pendle Hill. The market town of Settle is ten miles to the north, Sawley Village three miles to the south, and the isolated village of Newton lies six miles to the westward; in each of these places Friends have had a footing from very early days.

Not far from Newton, on the Lancashire side of the river Hodder, a stream beloved of John Bright in his schooldays, is the little old world town of Chipping.

There is every reason to believe that it was near Chipping that Alexander Parker was born.

In Chipping Parish Register, among the list of baptisms, the following entry occurs:—

Alexander sonne of Rob<sup>t</sup> pker of the Lees 21<sup>st</sup> Aprill 1628.

The date of A. P.'s death is recorded by John Whiting as 1<sup>st</sup> mo., 1688/9, and his age as sixty years—particulars which coincide with the baptismal entry in the Parish Register. Alexander Parker would thus be four years the junior of Fox.

The presence of Friends in the early days of their history in Chipping and its immediate neighbourhood would seem almost to have been overlooked. The local historian deals adequately with many matters, but leaves out all reference to the vigorous little band of Quakers who lived there; to seek information concerning them it is needful to consult Besse's *Sufferings* or the Registers of the Society.

Several members of the Parker family are to be found in the latter as residents in the Chipping district. Anne Parker, of "Leece," for instance, was married to Thomas Bond in 1656, and her interment is described as having taken place in 1668 in Thomas Bond's "own ground at Chipin."

Possibly she was a sister of Alexander Parker—whether the name Lees or Leece was the name of the family house, or the district on the Yorkshire bank of the Hodder where they lived, has yet to be determined.

In the diary of the Rev. Peter Walkden, a Nonconformist minister who had the charge of two small chapels, one at Chipping (part of which was his dwelling) and the other at Newton-in-Bowland, the following entry occurs under date 1725 :

May 9. Lords Day.

Jonathan Wilson and William Jackson told me that Jonathan's daughter had married a Quaker—but she desired me to come and baptise the child—I promised—So got my Mare and came direct to Raddam Laund and baptised *Alexander Parker* a son, calling his name Robert.

Radholme Laund, it may be said, is marked on the Ordnance map in close proximity to Lees-in-Bowland.

Possibly the father of the infant was a great-nephew of Alexander Parker, the subject of this account.

One Clement Parker and Susannah his wife seem to have been useful Friends in the Chipping district between the years 1680-1725.

John Whiting thus describes Alexander Parker :—

He was well educated, and had a gentleman like carriage and deportment for I knew him well. He married Prudence Wager of Stepney, widow, in 1669 and who died in 1688. . . he died in peace and his works do follow him, though his written ones were never collected, though they deserve to be.

Alexander Parker signed as a witness the marriage certificate of William Penn and Gulielma Maria Springett in 1672. Probably he was on intimate terms with Penn, and it is, perhaps, a fair surmise that it was through Parker's influence with William Penn that quite a number of Friends from Settle Monthly Meeting, and from the adjacent Chipping district, joined forces with the band of Sussex Quakers who migrated to Pennsylvania in 1682 along with the Founder himself.

DILWORTH ABBATT.

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### *William Penn's Declaration of Intention of Marriage.*

At a Mens Monthly Meeting at Horsham, the 11<sup>th</sup> of the 10<sup>th</sup> Month, 1695:—

This Meeting, William Penn of Worminghurst In Sussex Did the first time Declare his Jntentions of taking Hannah Callowhill of the City of Bristol, to be his wife, whereupon this Meeting Apoints Thomas Wright, William Garton, Samuel Telly, Tho. Snashall, Richard Gates, and John Prior to Enquire Concerning his Clearness on the Account of Marriage, and bring their Report to the next Meeting.

At a Mens Monthly Meeting at Horsham, the 8<sup>th</sup> of the 11<sup>th</sup> Month, 1695:—

To this Meeting Did our Deare friend William Penn send a few lines under his hand, wherein he signified his Jntention of taking Hannah Callowhill to be his wife, and the Seuerall friends Apoynted to Enquire Concerning his Clearness from all others on the Account of marriage Did Signifie that they find nothing but that he is very Cleare in that matter, soe this Meeting hath ordred a Certificate to be sent to the friends of the City of Bristol, to which the said Hannah Callowhill doth belong.

Taken from the Minute Books of Horsham M.M., deposited in **D**.