

# THE JOURNAL

OF THE

## FRIENDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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### The Annual Meeting

THE Annual Meeting of the Friends Historical Society was held at Devonshire House during Yearly Meeting. In the absence of the President, James Herbert Midgley, on account of his wife's illness, the chair was taken by Isaac Sharp. In addition to transacting the usual business, those present decided unanimously to send a message of sympathy and good wishes to Norman Penney.

The Meeting was much gratified to hear that James H. Midgley had decided to present the Swarthmoor Hall Account Book to the Society, so that this unique manuscript will now remain in the Devonshire House archives. M. Ethel Crawshaw, Assistant Librarian, read the President's Address, entitled "Two Hundred and Forty Years Ago in Furness," from which we print the following extracts:

As the Swarthmoor Hall Account Book will soon be published,<sup>1</sup> I thought it might possibly interest members of the Friends Historical Society if I anticipated the complete reproduction by a few notes upon some of the items contained in it.

Having lived for many years in the Furness district, and made a fairly close study of the entries in the Account

<sup>1</sup> To be published by the Cambridge University Press. The MS. is now all in type, but the work of annotation has been delayed on account of Norman Penney's illness.

Book, these seemingly prosaic details bring to my own mind vivid pictures of the Swarthmoor family and the people living in the neighbourhood. I can only hope to transmit to you a few rough sketches drawn from some of these entries made by Sarah Fell, during the years 1673 to 1678.

There is not time, nor indeed need, for any historical background, but I may just remind you of a few of the great people who were cotemporaries of those whose names are recorded here. Charles II. was King. John Milton was still living, but died in 1674. John Bunyan, released from Bedford gaol in 1672, was busy publishing his *Pilgrim's Progress*, which, before his death in 1688, ran through ten editions. Isaac Walton, beloved of anglers, died in 1683. Christopher Wren was rebuilding the churches of London which had been destroyed in the Great Fire. Evelyn and Pepys were the chroniclers of the day. Butler had written his *Hudibras* and was still alive. Dryden had reached middle age. The philosophers Hobbes and Locke were both living. Amongst other cotemporaries were the artists Sir Peter Lely and Kneller, also the scientists Sir Isaac Newton, whose *Principia* was published in 1687, and Boyle, the noted chemist. The Clergy of the English Church were represented by such men as Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Burnet, and Bishop Ken.

As the price of articles is naturally one of the interesting features of the Account Book, it is well to remember how different were the conditions of property then from what they are now.

The Duke of Ormond, reputed the richest noble of the time, had an income of some £22,000; the average income of a Peer seems to have been about £3,000, and of a Member of Parliament £800. Rent was about one-quarter or one-sixth of what it is now. Of wages I shall have something to say later. Turning to the Account Book, the accounts may be roughly divided as follows:

1. General accounts of the household, including personal purchases.

2. Farm accounts of Swarthmoor Hall, Marsh Grange, and outlying fields at Gleaston, Osmotherly, and other places.

3. Accounts of freightage of vessels taking corn and iron to Liverpool, Bristol and Cornwall.

4. Accounts connected with iron forges and sale of iron.

5. Money lent and returned with or without interest.

6. Taxes and Rates of various kinds.

7. Accounts relating to Meetings of the Society of Friends, the imprisonment of Friends, etc.

Probably the Swarthmoor Hall family were owners or part owners of vessels trading to different seaports; at any rate there are many entries showing that wheat, barley and oats, as well as iron, were shipped to Liverpool, Bristol and Cornwall, and that tin was brought back from Cornwall, possibly from mines in which Thomas Lower had an interest. It seems to have been the custom to provide refreshment when vessels were being loaded or unloaded, of which the following is an example :

July y<sup>e</sup> 30<sup>o</sup> by m<sup>o</sup> in expence for beere, when the slate  
&c was vnloading out of G: Kirkhams  
vessell, y<sup>t</sup> day; Bro: L: acct .. 000 or 00

In a paper on "The Bloomeries and Forges of Furness," read before the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society some years ago, the Rev. Thomas Ellwood of Torver states that, owing to complaints of the scarcity of wood, bloomeries and forges had been suppressed in the reign of Elizabeth and reopened early in the eighteenth century. It is evident, however, from this Account Book that forges were being worked again as early as 1674—and the probability is that, to a large extent, wood and not coal was used in the smelting.

Many references occur to payment of Poll Tax.<sup>2</sup> This was the tax instituted in 1380, in the reign of Richard II., which was the immediate cause of the rising of Wat Tyler, and the revolt of the peasants of Southern

<sup>2</sup> The Poll Act of 1667 (18 Car. 2, cap. 1) was passed for the purpose of raising moneys towards the maintenance of the Dutch War. It was continued 19 Car. 2, cap. 1. Another Poll Act of 29 & 30 Car. 2, cap. 1, with similar provisions, was passed to provide money for a war against France. According to Macaulay (chap. 20), there was a Poll Tax levied in 1694 under St. 5 & 6 William and Mary, cap. 14. George Fox (Swarth. MSS. vii. 165), advised Friends to pay Poll Tax. (Note kindly supplied by William C. Braithwaite.)

England. It was supposed to be levied according to the property and position of the people, but fell the most heavily on the poor. It was finally abolished eleven years from the date of which I am speaking, when William and Mary came to the throne.

Hearth Money<sup>3</sup> is referred to ; this was a tax levied in 1661, and was particularly odious to the English people for two reasons. It could only be levied by visits of inspection, and it was farmed out to individuals who in exacting its payment did so with the greatest harshness, seizing the goods of the owners if the money was not immediately forthcoming. It, like the Poll Tax, was abolished in 1689.

There are many references to the Society of Friends. Payment for books and papers for meetings, payments towards the building of Lancaster Meeting House (one of the oldest in the country) ; but most of the entries are payments either into or out of what is called the " Meeting Stock," which was used for the relief of distress and other matters.

How many servants lived at Swarthmoor Hall and Marsh Grange I do not know, but there are many entries dealing with such servants—male and female hired by the year—the men possibly living in cottages on the land belonging to Swarthmoor. The following are a few, with a statement of their wages :

1674.

May y <sup>e</sup> 2 <sup>d</sup> by m <sup>o</sup> given Adam Chanelhouse over his wages, w <sup>ch</sup> is to bee 40 <sup>s</sup> & what I please more .. .. .	000	01	00
Octo: y <sup>e</sup> 13 <sup>o</sup> by m <sup>o</sup> p <sup>d</sup> Tho: Caton in full fo <sup>r</sup> his wages fo <sup>r</sup> 10: weekes & 3: dayes. Moth <sup>rs</sup> acc <sup>t</sup>	000	07	02 $\frac{3}{4}$
Nov: y <sup>e</sup> 12 <sup>o</sup> by m <sup>o</sup> p <sup>d</sup> Mabell Stainton fo <sup>r</sup> 4: y <sup>rds</sup> of Kearsey fo <sup>r</sup> Tho: Caton a Coate, w <sup>ch</sup> is to bee in pt fo <sup>r</sup> his wages .. ..	000	07	08
ffeb: y <sup>e</sup> 7 <sup>o</sup> by m <sup>o</sup> p <sup>d</sup> Tho: Caton in full fo <sup>r</sup> his wages fo <sup>r</sup> 15: weekes & 1: day, from y <sup>e</sup> 12 <sup>o</sup> of octo: till this day, in w <sup>ch</sup> time hee was 10: dayes out upon his owne acc <sup>t</sup> & now all is cleare betwixt vs till this day .. ..	000	04	02

<sup>3</sup> Collected under the Acts of 13 & 14 Car. 2, cap. 20, and 16 Car. 2, cap. 2.

Anne Standish, another servant at Swarthmoor, came in November, 1675, Edward Braithwaite bringing her over from Lancaster at a cost of 1s. 11d. The year's service was not without its troubles for, in November, 1676, there is the following entry :

1676.  
 Nov: ye 21<sup>o</sup> by m<sup>o</sup> p<sup>d</sup> Ann Standish in full for 1 : yrs wages  
 1<sup>li</sup> 17<sup>s</sup> 06<sup>d</sup> of w<sup>ch</sup> Rec<sup>d</sup> backe of her for  
 a Silver spoone shee Lost 8<sup>s</sup> & for a pott  
 shee broke 6<sup>d</sup> soe p<sup>d</sup> her .. .. 001 09 00

She left soon after, when Sister Rachel, overlooking her faults, gave her a shilling.

All through these years one of the most familiar figures at the Hall must have been Peggy Dodgson, charwoman in chief—who seems to have been able to do anything from “scaleing” manure on the fields and “dressinge peates,” to taking the place of Agnes Wayles when she went to her parents' funeral.

Her name occurs on almost every page, generally in receipt of the same sum paid to the labourers in the vineyard, *i.e.*, one penny a day. This was indeed the usual price paid for the work of women and girls on the farm, as shewn by many entries.

In going through a list of the names of people mentioned in the Account Book, the amazing number of Fells strikes one at once, including a whitesmith, weaver, tailor, farmer, waller, bailiff, and bookbinder.

Probably the most regular visitor to the Hall was John Higgins, the postman. I wonder how often in his life he crossed the Sands to and from Lancaster. Every few days in these five years he came with letters and parcels for the family. According to Macaulay the carriage for a letter under eighty miles was twopence. Sometimes George Fox received four or five in a single day, and occasionally the charge for one letter rose to elevenpence. (At the beginning of the reign of Charles II. the revenue from letters was £20,000—and at the end of it £70,000.)

Besides letters (one with the King's speech in it) Higgins brought a great cheese and three salmon from some friends in Cheshire.

Daniel Cooper brings a chest from Kendal and there is the carriage of

“A Runlett of wine for ffather” from Robert Linton of Newcastle; glue and tobacco pipes 3<sup>d</sup>; “A tinn plate for ffather” 5<sup>d</sup>; 7 geese 10/-; a whistle for “ffather” 2<sup>d</sup>; dryed salmon to “ffather’s” account 8/2; ink and pipes for him 8<sup>d</sup>; 2 Almanacs 1/2 and Juniperberries 1/6.

When George Fox left Swarthmoor he gave John Braithwaite a pair of cloggs value 1s. 3d. From Holland he sent a box with “mapps & holl: Cheeses” by way of Newcastle and Kendal, which duly arrived in December, 1677, under the care of Edward Cooper.

Lawyers’ fees were certainly not exorbitant, for Richard Simpson, Attorney, for work connected with the administration of “Uncle Richardson’s” estate, only charged sixpence, and for expense about some Osmotherly land both at Dalton and Ulverston, one penny. He bought the Law Books of “Uncle Richardson” for fifteen shillings.

Except when Margaret Fox was away during George Fox’s Worcester imprisonment, and for a short time when she accompanied him as far as Sedbergh—on his Southern journey—she seems to have been at Swarthmoor throughout these years. Most of the entries are put down to “Mothers account.”

Mary Lower’s personal expenditure included white wine, black gallowne, chocolate brought from Lancaster, and cinnamon water made by Jane Gregg of Cartmel.

Early in the accounts there are references to little Margaret Lower having white bread and a little porringer, and then, in May, 1675, £4: 12: 2 is paid for “litle Margrett Lowers funerall,” and in that short entry is summed up all the sorrow and the tears that the loss of a first-born bring; but in the same year little “Marjery” was born, who, in spite of childish ills that needed “diascordiun [whatever that may have been], Liquerice & annesseeds,” lived on and married happily in 1700. Sarah gave her a rattle at the cost of one penny.

Isabel Yeamans and her boy Willie were mostly at the Hall at this time. As shewn by the entries, she used to visit the Meetings at Kendal, Hawkshead,

etc., and when George Fox left Swarthmoor in 1677 she went with him and paid a visit to the Princess Palatine.

One can easily imagine that Willie Yeamans would be made much of by his grandmother and the three maiden aunts, Sarah, Susannah and Rachel. He had white bread, and shoe buckles, a knife of course, and gingerbread. As to education, he began with a "primer," which cost 3d. Then Richard Gowth, "schoolm<sup>r</sup>," was called in and was paid 1s. and again 2s.; afterwards he went for a time to a school at Pennington, and Jane Marshall was paid 2s. for sixteen days for his dinner, as it was too far to come home. When he had a cold he was dosed with garlick and "methridate." He was never a strong lad, and died at his Aunt Sarah's house in Essex at the age of twenty-seven or twenty-eight.

Among the things put down to Susannah's account are a looking glass, 4d., "m<sup>o</sup> p<sup>d</sup> Higgins for bringinge some phisicall things from Lanc<sup>r</sup>." She so admired little Bethia Rous's writing that as a stimulus to further excellency she sent her two hundred quills. She bought a black hood for 4s., and two black round whisks for 4s. 4d. (these were, I believe, tippets). Brimstone 1d., and Ale—Sister Susannah's diet drink, 1s. 1d.

I am sorry to say there are at least two entries of tobacco pipes for Sister Susannah, though no doubt they were only bought as presents, or let us suppose to blow soap bubbles to amuse the children. That she was kind-hearted the following little history will show:

1677.

Mar: y<sup>e</sup> 26<sup>o</sup> by m<sup>o</sup> p<sup>d</sup> Leo: ffells wife, y<sup>t</sup> shee p<sup>d</sup> Rich:

Petty wife of y<sup>e</sup> Nooke in pt of 4<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>d</sup> for a sheepe, y<sup>t</sup> a mastiffe dogg of our<sup>s</sup> worried longe since, upon sist<sup>r</sup> Susannahs acc<sup>t</sup> because shee was some cause of p<sup>r</sup>venting y<sup>e</sup> dogg from hanging before .. 000 02 06

Rachel wore "allamode whisks," and "vizard maskes" and ash coloured petticoates, and bought "vertigrasse to die stockens with." Whether it was due to "vertigrasse dyed stockens" I do not know, but she was ill in 1677, and "40 latches" had to be brought with which to bleed her. That she recovered we all know, because in 1682 she married Daniel Abraham, and

died at the age of seventy-nine, leaving one son, who inherited the estate.

And now, in conclusion, let us turn to a few of the entries relating to Sarah, made by herself in this neatly-kept book. They tell, amongst other things, of how much devolved upon her in connection with the family property, and the work of the Society of Friends. From Thomas Lawson she bought, at the cost of 1s. 6d., "ye younge clarkes Tutor," though I should have thought she could have tutored any clerk! Though we know from other sources that she had learned Hebrew, and was a well-esteemed Minister, and Clerk of the Lancashire Women's Quarterly Meeting, she could enjoy a day at "Millnthorp faire," and, by the way she speaks of her "Grey Robin," it is evident that she was fond of outdoor exercise. She wore, it is true, dove-coloured petticoates—a really Quaker hue—but she had also sky-blue stockings, and bought sky-coloured yarn for Anne Bayley and herself. She looked well after her boy Tom, buying him clothes and keeping his money for him.

It is almost a relief to find that, although she was so careful and executive, even in spite of money-bags for which she gave one penny, she had the misfortune to lose her purse one market day, as the following entry testifies:

1675  
Mar: ye 18<sup>o</sup> by m<sup>o</sup> I lost out of my pockett in vlvverstone  
Markett, & fo<sup>r</sup> callinge it .. .. 000 13 02

To Sarah Fell I feel we all owe a debt of gratitude for this simple record of family life in the seventeenth century, though it tells us little of passing public events, and little too of the trials and persecutions which they and many others were suffering for their faith. If some of the things I have mentioned seem trivial, and the religious side seems to be almost absent, we may think of the words of Anthony Pearson on his first visit to Swarthmoor years before: "Oh! how gracious was the Lord to me, in carrying me to Judge Fell's, to see the wonder of His power and wisdom,—a family walking in the fear of the Lord, conversing daily with Him, crucified to the world, and living only to God."

JAMES HERBERT MIDGLEY.