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Some Incidents in the Life of John Salkeld (1672:1739)

BY the kindness of Ellen Pyle, of London Grove, Pa., we have received information of a rare pamphlet, entitled, *The Salkeld Family of Pennsylvania, from John, who Emigrated in 1705, to the Fourth Generation so far as known.* By a Descendant, 1867. We are informed that the book was "printed by an amateur who had never previously set up more than a few pages of type."

Ellen Pyle has sent us extracts from the above book, some of which we now present to our readers :

John Salkeld, son of Thomas Salkeld of Caldbeck, in the County of Cumberland, England, was born in 1672. He belonged to, and was a preacher in, the Society of Friends; he paid religious visits to Ireland in 1698 and 1703, and in 1700 he went on a religious mission to America.

On the eighth of Ninth Month, 1704, he married Agnes Powly [Pawley].

On the 9th of Seventh Month, 1705, John Salkeld and wife took passage from London to Philadelphia, and settled at Chester, on the Delaware. On the 25th of Twelfth Month in the same year, he gave in a certificate to Chester Monthly Meeting in Pennsylvania, from the Quarterly Meeting in Cumberland in Great Britain.

His occupation was that of a farmer and maltster, and he appears to have owned 400 acres of land near Chester, on which he resided. Besides this he had 1,000

acres purchased of Collett in Westtown, which for a number of years was covered with the primeval forest after the adjacent land was cleared, and was known as "Parker's Woods." This was afterwards divided and sold in small tracts by Joseph Parker Norris. He also owned a tract in Fallowfield township, the original purchase of Lancelott Fallowfield¹ of Great Strickland in the County of Westmorland, England; besides other tracts not so well determined.

As a preacher it was common for him to go to neighboring Meetings in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware, and he would occasionally extend his visits to distant parts. About the year 1712 a religious concern took him to New England; and it would appear that he went on a visit to England, Scotland, and Ireland in the year 1712, returning some time in 1715. About the year 1717 he revisited New England, and in the latter part of 1719 and the fore part of 1720, he was in the West India Islands. He visited Long Island in 1725, and revisited Great Britain in 1726-7. He again revisited New England in 1730, and in 1733-4 he visited Friends in Virginia and North Carolina. One of his journals to England is still preserved, and likewise his marriage certificate, and there may be other papers of interest among his descendants if those who have them would make the fact known.

On the 20th of Ninth Month, 1739, John Salkeld died at his residence, aged 67 years, 9 months and 4 days, and was interred at Friends' Burial Ground at Chester on the 22nd. The following lines then appeared, which were attributed by some to Joseph Braintnall, a Friend and Scrivener of Philadelphia. Others supposed them to have been written by Henry Hale Graham, a lawyer of Chester.

Salkeld from silent sitting slow would rise,
 And seemed as with himself he did advise.
 His first words would be soft, but might be heard;
 He looked resolved, yet spoke as if he feared;

¹ Lancelot Fallowfield, of Great Strickland, and others, were in 1673, "presented" for refusing to baptise their children or to attend "divine worship." In the original entry in the Diocesan Registry for Westmorland they are called "Tremebundos"—Quakers (THE JOURNAL, vi. 169). Fallowfield's sufferings are recorded by Besse (*Suff.* ii.).

He gained attention in a gradual way,
 As morning twilight ushers in the day.
 Proposed his theme, and sometimes would repeat,
 Lest some should not observe, or should forget ;
 Then gently louder on the text explain,
 And set to view its every nerve and vein,
 Till when he saw his listening flock give ear,
 And trickle from their tender eyes a tear,
 Thus louder then he strained his cheerful voice,
 The sounds grew tuneful and their hearts rejoice :
 To heaven he lifts them with delightful notes,
 And every soul to its first cause devotes,
 And when he ceases, still the music rings,
 And every heart its hallelujah sings.

The many anecdotes related of John Salkeld would indicate that he was of a lively and sometimes even jovial turn of mind bordering on the eccentric.

One day he was wearing a new hat that had a button and loop upon it, which was considered quite fashionable ; and as he cared but little about appearance, he did not notice the impropriety. He was, however, taken to task by a friend for wearing the fashionable appendage ; John immediately tore it off, remarking if his friend's religion consisted of a button and a loop, he would not give a button and a loop for it.

In 1739, when Salkeld was at a meeting in Chester, he saw several members overcome with drowsiness ; he suddenly sprang to his feet, and shouted, " Fire ! fire ! " Everyone was then awake and a cry was heard, " Where ? where ? " " In hell," responded John, " to burn up the drowsy and unconcerned."²

Returning from a religious visit in New Jersey, he observed that he had " breakfasted with the Lads, dined

² This incident is recalled by Ellen Pyle in her lines, *Rhymes of Marlborough Street*, read at the anniversary meetings at London Grove in 1914 and printed in the memorial volume :

" One day to that old house in '39
 A preacher came from Chester without hire,
 And seeing some had very drowsy grown
 Sprang to his feet and shouted ' Fire, fire ! '
 " At which the meeting folks were wide awake,
 And one excited sleeper rose to yell
 ' Oh, where ? ' and then an awful answer came—
 The words I really would not care to tell."

The Author states she found this anecdote in Myers's *Immigration of Irish Quakers*. It is on page 219.

with the Lords, and slept with the Hoggs"—the families by whom he had been entertained having these names.

Being in his cornfield by the roadside, a man by the name of Cloud came along and said, "John, thee will have a good crop of corn." He afterwards related the circumstance of his being in the cornfield when he heard "a voice coming out of a cloud, saying, 'John, thee will have a good crop of corn.'"

It would appear that John Salkeld was at times absent-minded, for when on a religious visit to Friends in New Jersey, on one occasion he took his daughter Agnes with him, she riding behind him on horseback, as was very much the custom at that time. After meeting he forgot his daughter and rode off, leaving her at the Meeting House.

John Salkeld rode at one time a horse with a blaze in its face, and a neighbor who thought to be merry with him said, "John, thy horse looks pale in the face." "Yes, he does," he replied, "and if thee had looked as long through a halter as he has, thee would look pale in the face too."

Being in attendance at a meeting some distance from home, in the midst of profound silence, he suddenly rapped his cane on the floor, and immediately repeated these words: "Resist the Devil this once, and he will not trouble thee again." In about a year afterwards, he visited the same neighborhood, when he was met by a man who told him that he was the person for whom his singular sermon was intended—that for some time previously to the time of its delivery he had been in a low desponding state of mind, and had that morning put a rope into his pocket with the purpose of putting an end to his life, but on his way to the spot selected, it came to his mind to go to meeting first, which he did, and there having met with such a well-timed and emphatic rebuke, his plans of self-destruction were wholly frustrated. He thanked Salkeld for having saved his life.

[Further information respecting John Salkeld may be found in *The Journal of James Dickinson*, pp. 150, 167; *The Friend* (Phila.), xxxiii. 372, 380, 388, 397, 404; Comly's *Miscellany*, iii; *Hist. of Chester County*; Bowden's *History*, ii. 222, 231n, 264; *Southern Quakers*, p. 73; *THE JOURNAL*, iv, vii, x; Kelsall Diaries and other MSS., in D.]