

## Nicholas Naftel (1762-1842)

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THE Naftels of the Island of Guernsey trace their ancestry back to Thomas Navetel, who owned land on the Island in 1534. But they have not been able to link up between that date and 1410, the last known mention of the name on the mainland of Normandy.

Thomas Naftel ( -1764) married Elizabeth Blondel (c. 1731-1809)<sup>1</sup>, the only child of Nicholas Blondel, "our celebrated clockmaker whose grandfather clocks are still so much esteemed over here and still keep such excellent time."<sup>2</sup> They had two sons, Thomas Andrew (1759-1843) and Nicholas (1762-1842). The father dying early the mother and sons went to reside with the latter's maternal grandparents and the elder son learnt the trade of clock-making. The younger son, after having, at an early age, led a seafaring life, was placed in the office of the Clerk to the Peace. His introduction to Quakerism is described by himself on this wise :

In 1776, whilst I was in this office, Claude Gay, a Friend in the ministry, came to Guernsey and as he had married a Guernsey woman, he came to the Clerk's office for some copy of law transactions concerning some of her property. . . . He preached several times in a large room and distributed several books.

The elder brother, being of a studious turn of mind, discovered one of these books—*No Cross No Crown*, and was convinced, by what he read, of the tenets of Quakerism. Nicholas, on the other hand, took again to a seafaring life (1779) and was a prisoner in France for some time. On his liberation he returned to his island-home and took up clockmaking. The influence of Thomas was soon felt by Nicholas and he was further impressed by a visit to a Friends' meeting at Exeter in which he uttered a few words, and after which he was invited to the home of John Dymond, the elder. On a business visit to London, c. 1783, he attended Westminster meeting at Peter's Court,

<sup>1</sup> "Elizabeth, widow of Thomas, died 1809, aged 78, non-member"—Friends' Registers.

<sup>2</sup> CAREY, *The Beginnings of Quakerism in Guernsey*, 1918.

and there met Jean de Marsillac and Louis Majolier, also several London Friends.

Somewhat later an application was made to London Y.M. for membership in the Society, in the following words :

Friends. Having by the light and spirit of Christ been brought to a conviction of your principles, we desire to be made members thereof.

T. A. NAFTEL

PETER LE LACHEUR

NICHOLAS NAFTEL

MARGUERITE LE LACHEUR

18th of 6mo. 1786.

The applicants were visited by John Eliot, Adey Bellamy, and John Sanderson and in the following year they were admitted.

In 1789, Nicholas Naftel married Mary Higman (1756-1820), of Cornwall, and in 1792 Thomas Andrew married Anna Jacob (1767-1801), of Fordingbridge, Hants.

In 1804 N. and M. Naftel and their children left the Island and settled at Colchester, where was living their eldest son, Nicholas. "I was mostly employed in gardening, and also in other jobs ; sometimes repairing a clock or a watch."

Mary Naftel travelled extensively in the ministry, her husband mostly accompanying. In 1816 she crossed the Atlantic and was absent about two years.

For a short time from 1811 the Naftels lived in Southwark, "as I expected my son Nicholas to have walked the hospitals but he declined, and a place being vacant at William Allen's, Plough Court, chemist and druggist, thither he went." Then they returned to Essex and settled at Chelmsford.

After his wife's death, N. Naftel travelled about from place to place, and was in America on visits to his son Joseph, who emigrated thither. His eldest son, Nicholas Blondel (born 1791), was lost at sea off Newfoundland in 1826, and his daughter, Mary (born 1793), died in 1827. In 1831 he settled in Guernsey and died there in 1842 and was buried in the Friends' Burial Ground, near St. Peter's Port, a photograph of which appears in Miss Carey's pamphlet.

Joseph, the only surviving son (1799-1849), married in Guernsey, in 1835, Martha Dumaresque. They had

one son, Joseph Nicholas, who did good service in causing his grandfather's *Memoirs* to be printed.

In the elder branch, that of Thomas Andrew Naftel, the line is continued to the present, but Quakerism died out in Paul Jacob Naftel (1817-1891),<sup>3</sup> father of Mr. Cecil Oakley Naftel, the owner of the *Memoirs*.

The book from which most of the foregoing has been taken is an octavo of 125 pages, entitled *Memoirs of Nicholas Naftel*. The preface reads :

These Memoirs are from the manuscript in my possession, I being the only one of the name living,<sup>4</sup> except a daughter, of this branch of the family. The Naftels were originally from Normandy, where the family crest and order of Knighthood were bestowed in very ancient times.

JOS. NICH. NAFTEL.

Oct. 29, 1888.

The copy belonging to Mr. Cecil Oakley Naftel, of London and Chipstead, Surrey, has been on loan at Devonshire House. It is said to be the only copy in Europe.<sup>5</sup>

It is very fortunate that N. Naftel's grandson arranged to have the *Memoirs* printed, but unfortunate that many of the names of persons and places mentioned are incorrectly spelt and some almost unrecognisable.

For previous references in THE JOURNAL to Nicholas and Mary Naftel, see xiii. 15, xiv. 188, xv. 51, 53, 57. See also minutes of Essex Meetings.

<sup>3</sup> "Our most distinguished Guernsey artist."—CAREY.

<sup>4</sup> This was written in 1888—presumably the writer married later and had a son, as private advices from Cleveland, O., dated May, 1921, inform us of another Joseph N. Naftel, a young man, now living at 3177 West 14th Street, Cleveland, son of the printer of the memorials, whose father died recently.

<sup>5</sup> A copy for **D** is much desired.

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John Drake of Pikely, near to Thornton (40 years a Quaker, but of late got above them) was buried at their burial place near Bradford, Dec. 30, 1691, aged 76.

OLIVER HEYWOOD, *Diaries*, ii. 161.