

# A Quaker Family Carrying Pistols

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The following extracts, with others, from the Cork records were copied by Charlotte Fell Smith at the expense of the late Francis C. Clayton.

11 xii. 1688. "Severall ffriends of this Meeting haueing at Sundry times heard of a certainty that Samuel Abbot hath of late borne armes and walkes y<sup>e</sup> street in Moyallow w<sup>th</sup> a Carbine or the like instrum<sup>t</sup>; not only so but its reported his daughters have beene known to haue a pocket pistoll carrying ab<sup>t</sup> them vnd<sup>r</sup> p<sup>t</sup>ence of defence &c w<sup>ch</sup> things being contrary to y<sup>e</sup> p<sup>r</sup>inciples of truth by vs p<sup>r</sup>essed and quite contrary to the practice of ffreinds from the beginning, ffriends are much concerned at it and desires a lett<sup>r</sup> may be written forth<sup>wth</sup> to him to lay the Dang<sup>r</sup> & hurt therof before him, and to desire him if he Were euer seene vpon any Such act, that he may immediatly condemne his forwardness, and not only lay aside & Quit himselfe of his armes, but wholly to shut out all such things out of his Minde, least he suffer hurt in himselfe & cause a reflection vpon the peacable truth of our profession. Tho<sup>s</sup> Wight to write y<sup>e</sup> lett<sup>r</sup> and to desire Jo<sup>n</sup> Butler & W<sup>m</sup> End or one of them to dell<sup>r</sup> it."

25 i. 1689. "John Butler being called upon to know what ansuear Sam<sup>l</sup> Abbott returned him vpon his dell<sup>r</sup>ing the lett<sup>r</sup> to him from last p<sup>r</sup>vince Meeting he sayth as to the lett<sup>r</sup> he gave no answe<sup>r</sup> in Writing nor did his behaviour bespeake a compliance to the Substance of it; being in an ill frame of spirit to Jo<sup>n</sup> Butler; and when he came first to speake to him, came w<sup>th</sup> his gun on his arme through Moyallow streete for w<sup>ch</sup> Jo<sup>n</sup> Butler reproved him, & he stood to justifie himself, saying he made no scruple to make use of them in his defence or words amounting at least so high. Some few dayes after, Sundry Corke friends going to a Meeting at Moyallow they spoake w<sup>th</sup> the s<sup>d</sup> Sam<sup>l</sup> adviseing & pswading him farther, to whom the s<sup>d</sup> Samuell Seemed not so stiff in his justification but seemed more concerned y<sup>t</sup> it gaue offence to ffriends then for any Euill he had done in it. As to his

daughters Wearing a pockett pistoll as was reported, We finde no grounds for that and beleieve vpon the examination of it that they were cleare of any such Matter, and the Meeting doe hereby clear them. But as to Samuel Abbots p<sup>t</sup>, the Meeting doe condemne him for his practice in the s<sup>d</sup> action as being contrary to y<sup>e</sup> principles of truth w<sup>ch</sup> We profess and a great occasion to bring a scandall vpon ffriends."

16 ix. 1691. "Abbot being returned from England came to meeting again & was suffered in silence the first time, but Fr<sup>ds</sup> then hearing he had raised a troop of soldiers & rec<sup>d</sup> a commission, on his appearing again he was desired to desist, at which he angrily protested. After ward other accounts of his ill conduct coming to Fr<sup>ds</sup> a paper was read or attempted to be read disowning him, but he snatched & tore it, seized "this booke" saying he w<sup>d</sup> burn it, &c. It was thought meete to incert these passages (a page) out of the meeting as a record & testimony ag<sup>t</sup> him & his Unchristian Practice and behaviour."

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On this subject, Isabel Grubb, of Carrick-on-Suir, writes :

"So far as I could find when working up the doings of Friends in the War of 1689-1692, S. A. was the only one who entered the army. A modern Irish historian, Ingram, in *Two Chapters of Irish History*, says that the Quakers at the time raised a regiment for King James, but having examined all the contemporary Quaker records and the papers especially about the war conditions, I can find no justification for Ingram's statement. Abbott's troop, if the statement refers to him, would presumably have been for King William."

I. Grubb sends with the above a further reference to Samuel Abbott, taken from the Minutes of Cork Six and Three Weeks Meetings, wording modernized :

16 ix. 91. "Samuel Abbott, of Moyallow, who took up arms and betook himself to the garrison (contrary to the peaceable principles of our profession), was condemned in i. 89, went to England, and when he returned Friends let him be till they saw whether he had improved, they found he

had taken up a commission to raise a troop. He was spoken to about it and told he could not be owned."

The minute continues: "He broke into a rage and fury against the meeting with many reproachfull words, saying he had as much right to sit there as any of the meeting and would not refrain it; so friends bore it until, hearing further common fame of several ill actions done by him both in this towne and in the country since his taking a commission, he was again spoken to in the meeting and desired to absent our Men's Meetings that his said actions might not reflect upon friends, as also that this meeting could not do less than condemn his actions as contrary to our principles and make a record thereof: to which he furiously, and in an extreme outrageous manner, replied that he would not go from our meetings, saying also: 'Let me see who dares make the record, he had as good eate the table,' and other words to that purpose. The record was writ on a wast paper and as it was reading he violently ran and snatched it from the hand of him that was reading and tore it to pieces, catching also at this book saying he would burn it, etc. Great was his rage and fury he vented against friends, with such grievous threats and mallitious reproachful words as is rare to meet with any the like from any reputed the worst of men, soe that as his violence and rage was such as not to endure to hear the reasonableness of what was writ against him (for the clearing of the truth of his aforesaid disorders) but broke it in pieces, It was thought meet to incert these passages thereof (out of meeting) as a record and testimony against him and his unchristian practice and behaviour and the same to enter in the Province meeting book."

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From *Read's Weekly Journal, or British Gazetteer*, Saturday, June 3rd, 1732:

*Edinburgh, May 23* . . . Friday last died Mrs. Miller, a Quaker, famous for her Industry and Improvements in Home Manufactures. It is said she employ'd 6 or 700 poor People at Spinning, &c. which makes her Death much regretted. She was Yesterday interred in the Quakers Burying Place; where Friend Ereskine gave the Word of Exhortation to a very numerous Auditory.

From *Notes and Queries*, June 4th, 1932.