

Colonial *and* Revolutionary Families *of* Pennsylvania

Genealogical and Personal Memoirs

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FOX FAMILY.

Six years after Charles II. had, under the Great Seal of England, given to William Penn by Letters Patent, the "Province of Pennsylvania with diverse great powers and Jurisdiction for the well Government thereof," and four years after the "Welcome" had brought Penn on his first visit to his infant colony, the ship "Desire," from Plymouth, England, on June 23, 1686, cast anchor in the river Delaware, bringing to the rapidly growing town of Philadelphia, which then contained about three thousand inhabitants, a company of emigrants known as the Plymouth Friends. Among them were Francis Rawle and his son of the same name, with six servants, Richard Grove and two servants, Nicholas Pearce with two servants, James Fox with his family and eight servants, John Shellson with his wife and four servants. Of those here classed as servants to the other passengers were John, Richard, and Justinian Fox, who, unable to pay for their passage to and outfit in the young colony, according to the custom of the day, had no doubt bound themselves for a certain time, at the end of which they were to receive an agreed-upon number of acres of land. Many of the emigrants themselves not rich in this world's goods, brought relatives with them in this way.

On March 13, 1685-6, before leaving England, Fox and Rawle, for themselves and their associates, had purchased five thousand acres of land of William Penn.

It was the purpose of these emigrants to make their settlement an industrial one. James Claypoole and Robert Turner, Penn's commissioners, writing to Thomas Holme, Surveyor General, say: "At the request of James Fox, Francis Rawle, Nicholas Pearce and Richard Grove, in behalf of themselves and other Friends of Plymouth, joynt purchasers with them of five thousand acres of land, that we would grant the said five thousand acres of land together, for a township, in the most convenient place for water for the encouragement of the woolen manufacture, intended to be set up by them; these we therefore, in the Proprietary's name, do will and require thee forthwith to survey * * * and make return hereof to the Secretary's office at Philadelphia the 5th of 5Mo., 1686."

Pennsylvania Archives, 2d. Series, volume xix, page 35, has the following: At a meeting of the Commissioners, 4Month 7, 1690, "James Fox and Fran. Rawle Request they may have a Patent for the 5,000 acres they Purchased now called the Plymouth Town, and that the Six Hundred Acres which was formerly Intended for a Town be Returned as part of the 5,000 acres. Ordered that a Warr't be made for the Returning the 5,000 acres of land in manner aforesaid.

"Ordered that Fran: Cook have the other half of the vacant lott next to the Plymouth Friends Lott in the High Street."

The five thousand acres were laid out in what is now known as Plymouth township, Montgomery county, but was at that time part of Philadelphia county. With their associates, Fox and Rawle took up their residence upon the land. A Friends' Meeting was at once established at the house of James Fox, which has continued to the present day and is known as Plymouth Meeting. The country was too young for such an industry as this company had planned and the scheme was abandoned. Neither Fox or Rawle remained long in the new settlement. It is said that their wives found it too lonely.

Francis, father of James Fox, is said to have been born in Wiltshire, England, about 1620. During the civil war he removed to Cornwall and settled in the parish of St. Germans. Having joined the Society of Friends in 1646, he married Dorothy Kekewich of Exeter, Cornwall. Francis Fox died in 1670 and his widow Dorothy in 1693.

Issue of Francis and Dorothy (Kekewich) Fox:

Francis Fox, b. at St. Germans, Cornwall, 1647; d. 1704; m. (first) Joan Smith, had two sons who d. young, and two daus., Rachel and Deborah, and settled in England. His second wife, whom he m. March 30, 1686, was Tabitha Croker, d. 1730. Of their children, Mary Fox, m. Feb. 10, 1707, Andrew Ellicott, who came with his son Andrew and settled in Bucks county, Pa., becoming founders of the well-known Ellicott family. The others, Francis, Sarah, George, Dorothy and John, m. and settled in England;

John Fox, d. young;

JAMES FOX, b. about 1650; d. Sept. 19, 1699; m. Elizabeth Record.

JAMES FOX² (Francis¹), born about 1650 in England; died Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 19, 1699; married Elizabeth Record, and was settled at Plymouth, Devonshire, England, where he was engaged in manufacture of cloth. He appears to have been leader, (with Rawle as his associate,) of the emigrant company of Plymouth Friends. Of the two, Fox is usually first named in the records. With James Fox there came to this country, his wife Elizabeth and children George, James, Elizabeth and Sarah. After the abandoning of their settlement in Plymouth, Pennsylvania, James Fox removed with his family to Philadelphia, where he became interested in public affairs. He was a member of Pennsylvania Assembly in 1688, and again, 1693-9. In his will he is styled a baker, and from the same source it may be learned that his business included more than the mere making of bread, for he leaves to his heirs, his "dwelling house, granaries, bake-house, boulting mills, bags, weights, seals," etc.

Issue of James and Elizabeth (Record) Fox:

George Fox, b. Plymouth, England, 1675; d. Phila., Sept. 8, 1699; m. at Burlington Meeting, N. J., May 20, 1696, Susannah, dau. of Joseph Hackney, "late of Hempstead, Hertfordshire, Old England," and his wife Elizabeth Jennings, sister of Gov. Samuel Jennings of N. J. Justinian Fox was present at the marriage and signed the certificate. In his will, which was witnessed by Justinian Fox and James Fox, Jr., George Fox made a bequest to Phila. Meeting for the use of a "public School lately established or about to be established." George and Susannah Fox had one son, George Fox, d. June 13, 1698;

James Fox, b. Plymouth, England; d. Phila., Jan. 30, 1700-1; m. at Phila. Meeting, March 31, 1699, Anne, dau. of Daniel Wills, of Northampton, Burlington county, N. J. She d. Oct. 27, 1701. Their only child, Mary Fox, d. July 16, 1702;

Elizabeth Fox, b. Plymouth, England, about 1683; m. at Phila. Meeting, March 9, 1683-4, John Jones, merchant, of Phila., of whose will Joseph Fox, son of Justinian, and Israel and James Pemberton were executors;

Sarah Fox, mentioned in wills of her parents. No further record;

Joseph Fox, mentioned in wills of his father, grandfather and grandmother. No further record;

Dorothy Fox, d. Phila., Oct. 28, 1692;

Francis Fox, b. Phila., May 22, 1691; d. there May 12, 1702.