

FOX FAMILY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649748020

Fox family by James Wallace Fox

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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By
JAMES WALLACE FOX

*Reprinted from the October Number
"William and Mary Quarterly"*



RICHMOND, VA.
WHITTET & SHEPPERSON, PRINTERS

1917
L77

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TO THE EDITORS OF THE WILLIAM AND MARY QUARTERLY:

I think that we, who have possession of points that have never been published should divulge them, especially in such cases as that of the vexed genealogy of the Fox line in Virginia, for instance, which arises from the destruction of so many records in the Old Dominion. With this motive in view, I am glad to give the following data:

In Spottsylvania, Will Book A shows that Joseph Fox took out "Marriage Lycence £1," when he wedded Susannah Smith. Now, by the kindness of Mrs. Linda Fox Walker, of Louisa, a descendant, I have a list of the children of Joseph Fox (1702-1749), and Susannah Smith (1707-1790), as taken from an old prayer book owned by Miss Lucy Wash, another descendant, of Louisa County, whom I met and who is still sprightly and gracious at the age of ninety or over:

Joseph, born January, 1730.

Ann, born August, 1732.

Thomas, born February, 1733.

Susannah, born April, 1736.

Elizabeth, born May, 1738. (Elizabeth Fox Price departed this life, April 19, 1814, aged 75).

John, born March, 1739; died Saturday, March 5, 1803; married Grace Young, Thursday, September 6, 1764, and had these children:

Joseph, born Sunday, June 23, 1765; died Wednesday, September 19, 1765.

Susannah Smith, born Friday, February 20, 1767; married Thursday, June 11, 1785, Thomas Wash.

(Ann, remembered by her grandmother, Susannah Smith Fox, in her will as being the daughter of John Fox, is not here recorded).

Francis, born February, 1741.

Agnes, born March, 1744;

Katy, born March, 1745. (Katy Fox Anderson departed this life, February 17, 1814).

Sarah, the leaf unfortunately torn off here, so we do not know the date of her birth, or if there were other children born after her, which is rather unlikely, as Joseph Fox died in December, 1749.

In an ended chancery cause in Augusta County (1788-1802), I find a confirmation of this marriage of John Fox and Grace Young, and that she was the daughter of John Young, of Gloucester. Mrs. William Carter Stubbs, of New Orleans, a most painstaking genealogist and an authority

on Gloucester families, gives me from the Abingdon Parish Register, which she copied in toto, the item that:

"Grace, the daughter of John and Mary Young, was born March (9th?), 1747, and Mary Young, her mother, died March 20, 1747."

Joseph and John, above, the sons of the older Joseph, were, undoubtedly, I think, the Captains of the Rangers from Louisa County who were in the French and Indian War, 1755-1756, and John the Captain of the Revolutionary Louisa Militia, mentioned in 1777. This younger Joseph was, also, I think, the Joseph Fox who was a member of the Committee of Freeholders, appointed Tuesday, January 31, 1775, at Westmoreland Court House, to see that the Articles of the Association in Westmoreland, which had been written by Richard Henry Lee and passed at Leedstown, February 27, 1766, were faithfully observed in that county, according to the direction of the Continental Congress. I think this because Joseph Fox, of Westmoreland, conveyed to John Fox 800 acres on Cub Creek, in Louisa, on January 30, 1772, Susannah Fox being mentioned; and, again, Joseph and John sell laid in Louisa, about 1776.

Among the possessions of the elder Joseph was a grant to him by George II, January 4, 1735, 400 acres, then in Hanover, to-day in Louisa; and a descendant, now living in Louisiana, has a survey of this land made and signed by Washington, October 6, 1772. Joseph was one of the country gentlemen who were on terms of intimacy with Washington and often went hunting with him in Louisa.

Instead of the foregoing list of children of John and Grace, Attwood Wash (born 1799), one of their descendants and the father of the Miss Lucy Wash, herein referred to, gives this enumeration of them:

Josephus, married Miss Snead of Fluvanna. (If the item above about the death of Joseph, son of John and Grace, as an infant, is correct, then this may be one of those cases where, wishing to perpetuate a certain family name, as here that of the grandfather, Joseph, a second son was so named when the first one, bearing that name, died young, as sometimes happened.)

John ("Jack"), married Miss Maria Smock, of Richmond.

Charles (Charles James?), never married.

Nathaniel, killed by lightning, when a boy.

Meredith.

Susannah, married Thomas Wash.

Katy, married Nelson Jackson.

Betsy, married Jac. Burnley.

Polly, never married.

Nancy, never married.

(Ann, again not mentioned, as she was in the will of her grandmother, Susannah. Query: Could Nancy be the pet name for Ann?)

By the courtesy of the Reverend C. Braxton Bryan, Rector of Grace Church, Petersburg, I have an old Book of Sermons, by the Reverend Isaac Kimber, that once belonged to the Reverend John Fox, Rector of Ware Church. In it is the autograph, John Fox, of Gloucester, September, 1753, while on the title page is written, John Fox, 1776, and Anne Fox, 1790, these last being, of course, John Fox, of "Greenwich," and Anne Mason. There is, also, the autograph of Francis B. Whiting, stating that the book was presented to him by his beloved mother (Mary Hartwell Fox), in 1823, and that it came into the possession of M. W. Kemp, in 1827. It was finally presented by John Randolph Bryan, of Eagle Point, about 1858, to Miss Maria Fox, of the Reverend John Fox family. On the inside page of the back cover was a number of notes in pencil which, regrettably, some one tried to erase and, unfortunately, with too much success, but I can still make out two items (the words in parentheses being, apparently, what was written and fitting exactly into the spaces, the other words and the date being undoubted):

"Rev. John Fox (came) over from England, 1721, (and) settled on York (River in) Gloucester Co., (a place which was called) 'Greenwich,'" and, collaterally:

"Mrs. Olivier's Mother's sister was Mrs. Innis & her Mother was Lady Gouche, from England." (Gooch so spelled.)

I am trying to rescue the other items by photographic and other processes, but am doubtful of my success. This is the earliest date that I have yet seen in connection with the Reverend John Fox and leads to the surmise that, probably being a grown man to have *settled* at "Greenwich," he was, all the time, older than he has generally been thought to be during his Virginia career. Some have conjectured that he went to England for his theological education and, possibly, for his ordination into the ministry, copy of his (Latin) license to preach, dated September 11, 1731, being in my possession, by the courtesy of Mr. Charles P. Olivier, of the University of Virginia. The latest reference to him that I find is in the York records in connection with his slave, Cuffy, May 28, 1763, in which year he was, also, a visitor to William and Mary.

I send you a copy of his autograph as taken from this old book of sermons, for your possible use. Good hand-writing seems to have been one of the fortunate acquirements of the Foxes.

I enclose you, also, a photograph of the snuff-box given by Washington to Nathaniel Fox, who was a Captain on his staff and made a Major on the conclusion of his services on the closing of the Revolution. The name is somewhat worn in the lapse of time, but the "N. Fox" can be made out in a strong light falling on the silver top. This Major Nathaniel Fox is the one who lived at "Springfield," in Hanover, where he died in 1822.

He was, according to Miss Martha L. W. Jones, of Richmond, one of his descendants, the son of Thomas Fox and Philadelphia Claiborne, and, of course, the grandson of Joseph and Susannah. He was twice married: (1) to Marie King, and (2) to Susan Prosser, he having by this last six children, the fifth of whom was Richard Fox, born January 14, 1818, at "Springfield," dying February 9, 1897, having married, June 2, 1841, Elizabeth Johnston, a half-sister of Bishop Thomas U. Dudley. He had ten children, among them Miss Julia Lee Fox, of New York City, who owns this snuff-box, and James McCraw Fox, born 1854, dying 1914, having married Jennie Deane Hall, by whom he had Richard Fox and two other children. This youngest Richard inherited the charter membership of the family in the Society of the Cincinnati, of which, of course, his great-grandfather, Major Nathaniel Fox, was one of the first members or founders. This family yet has a claim against the United States for supplies furnished during the Revolution to the Continental army.

The relationship of the Virginia Foxes to the Sir Stephen Fox (1627-1716) family of England is confirmed by Mrs. Linda Fox Walker in the statement that Charles James Fox, the statesman, sent to his "relatives in Virginia" several presents of valuable jewelry, part of which, notably rubies and pearls, set in a brooch and ear-rings, was loaned by its owner, Charles James Fox, a Virginia bachelor, said to the son of John and Grace, to his cousin, Mary Moody (who married Henry B. Montague), and from her it was stolen by a negro woman. The Foxes and Montagues were anciently related and, afterwards, intermarried. Meredith Fox Montague, of New York, grandson of the above Henry B. Montague and Mary Moody, tells me of a watch sent by Charles James Fox to the wife of one of the Virginia Foxes, whose name he could not recall or give with certainty. This watch descended to his father, John H. Montague, who married Linda Fox; and, when Richmond was evacuated in April, 1865, he, for greater security, as he thought, placed it in a safe in his office which was burned up in the fire that followed. Explaining the reason of his request, he plead with the Federals to let him remove the safe promptly, but this they refused to do, so that, when the fire died down, all he could find was a distorted mass of gold and other metal. As he remembered, this watch had two "supporters," meaning, I suppose, two pictures flanking the center of the face, portraits painted on this porcelain dial, one of Frederick the Great and the other of his friend, Voltaire. The bachelor, Charles James Fox, had the Fox arms on wood, which he took to Richmond to be refurbished and repainted, and there it was lost. The sympathy of the statesman, Charles James Fox, for the American colonists and his efforts in their behalf in Parliament during the Revolution are said to have been begotten and inspired, largely, because of his correspondence with some of these kinsmen of his in Virginia.

The Reverend Thomas H. Fox, of Hanover, born 1793, son of Captain John ("Jack") Fox, born 1760 (Captain John being the brother of the Thomas Fox who married Leah Lipscomb), wrote on account of the Fox family which I have and in which he says:

"I understand that that branch of the Fox family from which we descended occupied a high official as well as social position in England.

"Our immediate ancestor in this country was Major John Fox, a cavalier officer (under Prince Rupert, a nephew of Charles the First), who distinguished himself in the important engagements during the Civil War. When Charles the First was taken prison, he (Major John), escaped to Paris and there, with two brother officers, Colonel Norwood and Major Morrison, formed a plan to rescue Charles from Carisbrooke Castle, on the Isle of Wight, where he was confined. They raised means to purchase a yacht which they manned with eighteen stout-hearted English yeomen. Ascertaining that he had been removed, they sailed for London, where they learned that their king had been beheaded on the morning of their arrival (January 30, 1649). Foiled in their purpose and not knowing what might await them, they embarked for America on board a vessel called 'The Virginia Merchant,' on the 20th of September, 1649, and were wrecked upon the shores of Accomack on the 8th of November of the same year. Sir William Berkeley, then Governor of the Colony, learning that some white men were among the Indians of the Eastern Shore, sent messengers to bring them before him, and, learning their history, he gave to all of them Colonial appointments. To Major Fox was assigned the command at Old Point Comfort which he held at the time that Cromwell's troops were sent over to the waters of Virginia to reduce the Old Dominion to subjection.

"Major Fox's descendants subsequently settled in Gloucester County, where they became quite influential and acquired large possessions. His son and heir, Henry Fox, received land in Gloucester County, in 1683; and married Anne West, granddaughter of Governor John West, son of Thomas West, second Lord Delaware."

In this are given details that I have seen nowhere else, but I find no confirmation of two statements: (1) that the name of this officer was Major *John* Fox, for, in England, I discover but one J. Fox in the service of Charles I (he being, apparently, a collector of supplies for the King), in these lines:

"Alchurch, to the third borough of, and the assessors of the monthly contributions, or to pay to Worcester, March 8, 1643. Signed, J. Fox."

I cannot tell if this was John Fox, or if the "J." stood for some other name. (2) Nor can I find that Major Fox was ever in command of Old Point Comfort (called, in those days, Point Comfort), but the records show that Major Morrison did have such command. I take it, then, that these two statements were unintentional on the part of the writer, misin-

formation, and that names and facts were confused. There are errors in the dates, too, but they closely approach Colonel Norwood's dates in his *Narrative of a Voyage to Virginia*, which describes the coming of these three guardsmen to the new land.

But, in Warburton's *Prince Rupert*, Mrs. Hutchinson's *Memoirs*, Gregson's *Lancashire Fragments*, Peck's *Desiderata Curiosa* and Secomb's *House of Stanley*, I find ample testimony as to the existence and martial worth of Captain (afterwards Major) Richard Fox, who took part, for instance, in defending Lathom House, the seat of Lord Derby, which was carried on, in his absence, by his Countess, Charlotte de la Tremouille (a cousin of Prince Rupert), who was called "her she-Majesty generalissima over all," and of whom a Roundhead journal of the day said that "three women had ruined this kingdom: Eve, the Queen and the Countess of Derby." Sir Walter has set his impress upon this siege in his *Peveril of the Peak*, so there is sufficient proof. Captain Richard Fox was one of the six captains in the beleaguered castle, from February till May 25th, 1644, their duties being assigned to them by lot.

"On Wednesday, April 10, 1644, a sally was made. Captain Fox, with colors in the Eagle Tower, gave signals when to march and went to retreat, according to the motion of the enemy, which he observed at a distance."

On Saturday, April 27th (the 22d having been Easter Monday), a sally was made at four o'clock in the morning, the purpose of which was to capture a mortar that had been annoying the royalists very much. Captain Fox took part in this and brought back the mortar, having lifted it on to a low drag, and, by strength of men, drawn it into the house. To quote:

"But now neither ditches nor aught else troubled our soldiers, their grand terror, the mortar piece, which had frightened them from their meat and sleep, lying like a dead lion quietly among them: every one had his eye and his foot upon it, shouting and rejoicing as merrily as they used to do with their ale and bagpipes. Indeed, every one had this estimation of the service, that the main work had been done, and that what was yet behind was but a mere pastime. . . . It was the greatest and most fortunate exploit. Her ladyship, though not often overcarried with any light expressions of joy, yet religiously sensible of so great a blessing, and desirous, according to her pious disposition, of returning acknowledgment to the right author, God alone, commanded her chaplains to make a public thanksgiving."

In fact, the Puritans temporarily gave up the siege on the second night following, removing all their cannon but one which they spiked.

Captain Richard Fox is referred to, later in the war, as Major Fox, the title by which he is called by Colonel Henry Norwood in his account of their eventful sea trip.