

**GENEALOGICAL RECORD OF THE  
HAMBLETON FAMILY,  
DESCENDANTS OF JAMES  
HAMBLETON OF BUCKS COUNTRY,  
PENNSYLVANIA, WHO DIED IN 1751**

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## INTRODUCTION.

**D**URING a visit to Chester County, Pa., in the summer of 1884, the writer made copies of some family records and obtained a little information relating to his ancestors and early relatives in the Hambleton line; and as interest in the subject increased, he opened correspondence with members of different branches of the family, as their names and addresses were gradually ascertained, with the hope of at least tracing out the immigrating ancestor and finding out whence he came. This work was commenced for the writer's own satisfaction, but others expressed such an interest in the matter that it was soon determined to prepare for publication, in form of a family record, such information as might be collected, and to trace out the different branches of the family as far as practicable.

With the effort and research thus far made, the earliest known ancestor found is James Hambleton, of Solebury, Bucks County, Pa., a Quaker, and a member of Buckingham Monthly Meeting in 1720, as shown by the records of that meeting. He died in 1751, leaving a large farm and a family of children, which are mentioned in his will. From whence he came is yet a matter of tradition and inference. Most of his descendants in the male lines, including the children of the women who were born Hambletons, have been traced out and recorded, and whatever knowledge they possessed relating to the earlier generations of the family earnestly solicited. The records of wills and deeds in Bucks County

and Philadelphia, have been carefully examined, also the records of Buckingham Monthly Meeting, and numerous family records. To pursue this research to the fullest extent will require considerable time and patient labor, and will be more likely to be fruitful of desired results, if different members of the family, who may be interested, will unite in their efforts, and each examine such works and records likely to throw light on the question, as he may have access to.

It has therefore been thought best, rather than delay for an indefinite time for further research, to publish at once the information thus far obtained, in its present shape, so that those interested can have the benefit of it, and should further research result in such additional information as would warrant it, a supplemental sheet containing it will be printed and sent to those having a copy of this book.

The amount of labor required to collect and arrange the material for this record will hardly be appreciated by one not having experience in the same line. Aside from the perusal of numerous geneological works, local histories, biographies and journals, that might throw light on the subject, and the personal examination of records, hundreds of letters have been written, and the material facts in the answers extracted and systematically arranged for publication. Frequently several letters would have to be written to the same person, in order to extract the desired information from some who took little interest in the subject. Others, not fully understanding the purpose of the inquiries, would at once conclude that some property or some large estate coming to the Hambleton family was involved, and would write to know its location, value, etc.

As to the place or country from whence our first

American ancestor came, the traditions of the family are by no means agreed. Among the children of Grandfather John, in Chester County, forty or fifty years ago, it was generally understood and said that the family was of Scotch origin, and among the descendants of his brother William, who early settled in Ohio, the tradition has uniformly been the same. William's son Thomas, still living, writes that his father was a man of some temper, and sometimes remarked after being excited, that his "Scotch blood had got up." But he cannot tell how near he was to the Scotch. Another writes "the family came from Scotland, but which ones, or when, I do not know." A granddaughter of the same William writes that she has heard her father (Charles) "speak of our ancestors as coming from Scotland, and that there was real estate in the city of Philadelphia that belonged rightly to their descendants, which if proven would make quite a fortune for them."

Among the descendants of Stephen's son James, and a few others, the tradition is that the family is of Welsh descent. One writes that she "used to hear it said that Great Grandfather Stephen came from Wales," and another, who understands that the family was Welsh, says that a native of South Wales told him recently that there were still people there of our name.

A descendant of Aaron writes that "the tradition among his ancestors was that the Hambietons were of Welsh and Irish extraction." And a great-granddaughter of Stephen's brother William, still living in Bucks County, relates that she has always been told by her parents and grandparents that they were Scotch-Irish; that William and Stephen Hambleton came from Ireland to Solebury, and purchased a large tract of land, about 800 acres, and divided it be-

tween them, and lived on it; that the name was Hamilton and not Hambleton, but William's second wife changed the *il* to *ble*, and her children took that name, and it was then taken up by Stephen's family. She had never heard of James Hambleton, the father of William and Stephen, though she still lives on a part of the original Hambleton farm, is very bright and intelligent, and possesses much knowledge of earlier generations of the family.

Now, as will appear by the record, William and Stephen were without doubt both born in Bucks County; their father James had before them owned the farms on which they lived, and the name is uniformly spelled with *ble*, in the early Monthly Meeting records, and also in the last wills of James, William and Stephen, and in the deeds and will of William's eldest son, the *il* being first generally adopted by William's younger sons, whose descendants still use that spelling.

This goes further to show how very unreliable tradition is where *definite* information is desired concerning family history and pedigree.

The inferences to be drawn from well-known facts would seem to be different from the traditions in regard to the origin of the family.

As will be hereafter shown, HAMBLETON is a very old English name, of Anglo Saxon origin, probably much older than the Scotch and the Scotch-Irish form, with the *il*. As far as the facts have been ascertained, the spelling of the name with *ble* is very rare in Scotland and Ireland, while it is the form most always used in England in former times. Then again we first find James settled in a neighborhood made up mostly of English immigrants; his friends and associates, judging from the names, were mostly English; all



his children, with possibly one exception, intermarried with persons of genuine English names; three of them, with certainty, married into families that came directly from England to Bucks County, and remembering the clannishness as to nationalities among immigrants, and the disposition to settle, associate and intermarry with those of their own nation, it would seem much more probable that James or his father came from England than that they were either Scotch, Irish, or Welsh.

As to family traits and peculiarities, some marked ones appeared through several generations. The men generally were above the average in height, large-chested, muscular, enduring, and inclining to be spare and thin after middle life, with long sharp faces and prominent noses. They had heads of good size, prominent in the lower part of the forehead and very high in the crown. The most marked mental characteristics were great firmness of character, persistency, high moral purpose, strong sense of duty, integrity, thrift, and practical common-sense. The family has furnished no brilliant geniuses, and no persons of large wealth or great renown. For several generations they were mostly Quakers and well-to-do farmers. They were brought up in the simple habits, moderate tastes, and honest purposes of an intelligent rural community, and have belonged to the solid middle classes of society, whose firmest belief was in the sacredness of truth, and the worthiness of moral virtue.

In their Quakerism they seem to have inclined to the liberal, progressive side, and when the society divided, about 1827, in those sections and neighborhoods that offered an opportunity of choice, they nearly all went with the Hicksites, who seem to have adopted the Unitarian view of Christ, the Universalist doctrine of future punishment, the

genuine Quaker spirit of practical morality, and their own ideas of divine revelation. As those of later generations of the family have dropped out of Friends' Meeting, a few have joined other churches, but much the larger number have inclined to Rationalism, and slid into doubt and disbelief concerning the common orthodox dogmas of religion.

They have expended their moral enthusiasm in advocating and advancing the various moral reforms of their day, rather than in devotion to the doctrinal phases of religion. Those of the generation preceding the late war were especially firm and ardent workers in the anti-slavery movement, and active agents on the "Underground Railroad," assisting fugitive slaves in large numbers, and though bred in the peace principles of Quakerism, which opposed all war and fighting, a goodly number of their sons went into the army, mainly from their interest in the emancipation of the slaves.

The following remarks are extracts from letters of several elderly Friends, who have had a wide acquaintance with the family :

"The early generations of Friends affected to despise all worldly rank and honors, yet under all some of them did feel pride of family; and the Hambletons I have known were not wanting in that feeling, though affecting to be very democratic. But their aspirations and ambitions were mostly for godliness, and always for refinement of mind and manners, and the cultivation of the noblest instincts of human nature."

"Though not many of the family have achieved great honors, the most of them have had reputations for morality, integrity and uprightness. For several generations they have planted themselves upon the rock of moral principle and reform."

"They have been a highly respectable family. Whilst none have become world-widely known, but few have turned out bad."

"Of the numerous tribe, I never knew one to be convicted of a penal crime, to be a county pauper, or to be accused of being very rich. They have been moral and temperate, and generally lived to a fair old age. Some years ago five generations were got together in Erie County, New York."

"While none have risen to great wealth or eminence, but few have

descended to extreme poverty, and fewer still to vice and crime. They have nearly all been self supporting, and fairly well off in the last half of life. They have always sustained a high character for uprightness, honesty and fair dealing."

While the descendants of the first William nearly all remained in Bucks County and vicinity, and are not very numerous at the present day, Stephen's children, with the exception of one daughter, all left their native county and went westward for newer lands and settlements. They and their descendants have faithfully fulfilled the scriptural injunction, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it," for they are to-day a numerous tribe, and are scattered over every northern State and Territory west of New England, besides eight Southern States and Canada. They still incline to settle on the frontiers of civilization, to subdue the wilderness, and grow up with the new country, and like their forefathers seek farms and lands for their principal investments. And although so many of them have been pioneers, surrounded by the poor moral atmosphere of frontier life, and like other settlers in the wilderness, deprived of many opportunities for education and culture, but few of them have degenerated to illiteracy or indifference to moral and intellectual improvement.

#### THE NAME IN ENGLAND.

Hambleton or Hambledon, the older form of the name, according to most writers on names, is without doubt of Anglo Saxon origin, and is a very old, though not a very common English name of both places and families.

"In Ford, in Ham, in Ley, in Ton,  
The most of English surnames run."

Dixon, in "SURNAMEs," says that the English terminations "ham," "ley," and "ton," are rendered by *home, field*