

HISTORY OF THE PROVINCE OF PENNSYLVANIA

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History of the province of Pennsylvania by Samuel Smith

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SAMUEL SMITH

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PENNSYLVANIA**

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

The History of the Province of Pennsylvania has been printed from Samuel Smith's manuscript in the library of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania. As an examination of his history of New Jersey indicates, this manuscript would have been carefully edited by the author before publication, but it has been deemed best to follow the orthography and punctuation of the original.

The author divided his work into two parts, of which this is the first. The second part contains: *The introduction, and some account of the religious progress of the people called Quakers therein, [Pennsylvania] including the like account respecting the same people in New Jersey, as constituting one yearly meeting.* This second portion was printed by Samuel Hazard in *The Register of Pennsylvania*, Volumes VI and VII, 1830-1831, with the exception of Chapters XVI and XVII, which were omitted as they contain nothing but a letter from Elizabeth Webb, giving an account of her religious experience, to Dr. Boehm, and his reply, both of which have we understand been published in a pamphlet; and as directions are likewise given to the transcriber of Smith's MS. to omit copying them.

Samuel Smith, the author of *The History of the Province of Pennsylvania*, was of Quaker stock, the great-grandson of Richard Smith of Bramham in the West Riding of Yorkshire, one of the original proprietaries of West Jersey and a signer of *The Concessions and Agreements of the Proprietors, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Province of West New Jersey, in America*, 1676.

He had by his wife Anne Yeates, Samuel Smith of Bramham, who settled in West Jersey in 1694, married Elizabeth Lovett, and was a member of the General Assembly for several years.

Richard Smith Esquire, of *Green Hill*, Burlington County,

New Jersey, son of the last named Samuel, was born in 1699; he represented Burlington County in the General Assembly for nearly twenty years, married Abigail Rapier, and died in 1751.

Samuel Smith the historian, son of the last named, was born in Burlington, December 13, 1720, a member of the Religious Society of Friends. He was educated at home, and at an early age served as a member of the Council and of the General Assembly of New Jersey. In 1768 he and his brother John, and Charles Read, were made custodians of the seals of the province, during the absence of Governor William Franklin in England. Samuel Smith was treasurer of the Western Division of New Jersey from 1751 to 1775.

He made a collection of materials for histories of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and of the Society of Friends in those provinces. In 1765 he published, *The History of The Colony of Nova-Casaria, or New Jersey; containing an Account of its First Settlement, Progressive Improvements, The Original and Present Constitution, and Other Events, To the Year 1721, with some Particulars Since; and A Short View of Its Present State. By Samuel Smith. Burlington, in New Jersey: Printed and Sold by James Parker: Sold also by David Hall, in Philadelphia. MDCCLXV.*

Mr. Smith married in November, 1741, Jane daughter of Joseph Kirkbride, by whom he had children, Joseph, Abigail, Sarah and Richard. He died at his residence, *Hickory Grove*, near Burlington, July 13, 1776. (Smith, *The Burlington Smiths*, 1877, pp. 101, 117, 209. *Archives of the State of New Jersey. First Series. Volume IX*, p. 394. *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography. 1888.*)

WILLIAM M. MERVINE.

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BY
SAMUEL SMITH

PREFACE

My design in the following sheets was to secure to the public, an account of the original manner of settling with a regular connection of such principal transactions for the first forty years afterwards as I could obtain. I was at the conclusion of that period too young for much observation:—the merit of this collection (if any) must consequently principally rest upon materials left by others: such of these as I have here and appeared to me sufficiently founded, and worthy of credit, either from publick notoriety or undisputed memorials, original settlers, & records; or from probabilities supported by incidents, many of them apparently incapable of deception:—And nothing depending barely upon the memory of any man was adopted without caution;—The last however was but a small part.

I give this short view of things merely to disclaim either merit or responsibility respecting the matters introduced; They are simply the product of such of the above materials as were fit for public use, and in the readers estimation must stand or fall as they appear to deserve; with regard to the propriety of the choice, I had the difficulties to encounter common on such occasions—A profusion of matter in some instances—scarcely sufficient in others:—I selected with the judgment I had and endeavoured to arrange with as much clearness and method and comprise them in as few words as I well could.

To those acquainted with the original state of literature in the province, embarrassm^t will readily occur in attempting a particular view of all the persons materially concerned in the first improvements;—such of them as were active in legislation fell in course to mention—Not many others are or could be properly introduced in the first part—let it suffice that the early settlers in general, tho' not many of

them men of learning or science, were known to be people of reputation and credit. They went through many hardships to improve the country, and did it on their own expences, at least without much charge or difficulty to the parent-state. Some of them brought effects to a considerable value, some spent them in improvements, others gained, and of these a large number, their children feel it, and are or probably may be as happy as their own economy will allow.

I have remarked somewhere in the History on the inconvenience of descending minutely into the particulars of several of the later sessions of Assembly; A deference to general sentiments seemed to dictate such a caution, both to avoid a sameness of matter and for the reason then given, that their proceedings are now printed, so that any additional satisfaction on the subjects treated of, is easily had. The more material parts give a general view of the times, and mark events and characters with a degree of precision and exactness not to be expected elsewhere, & were therefore thought sufficient to answer the purposes of this part of the undertaking.

An account of the natural curiosities and Botanical discoveries; and of the many fine improvements in Building and other works of convenience and charity, with a particular Geographical description of the Counties, Towns, and Districts throughout the province, might be an acceptable present abroad, but to do it effectually would require a skill in and turn to the business that I have not, and more time and labor (If I had) than could now be spared.—They who clear a road through this naturally rough country commonly mean it only for use till a better is provided; this first attempt towards a History of that flourishing province so far as it goes, may at least furnish materials—perhaps otherwise excite to a more compleat & finished work.

In writing for the public, espescially in attempt^s anything new, diffidence is natural—success may be deserved—Anxiety will not always command it—He who, after having