

**MEMOIRS OF JAMES
LOGAN: A DISTINGUISHED
SCHOLAR AND CHRISTIAN
LEGISLATOR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649646555

Memoirs of James Logan: A Distinguished Scholar and Christian Legislator by Wilson Armistead

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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Thy real friend
James Logan



P R E F A C E.

No end has yet been found to the making of books, not only upon new, but upon old subjects; and perhaps at no time more than the present, has the disposition to write, and to rewrite history and biography, been more active. Publications having reference to the Society of Friends, their principles, and their distinguished men, have multiplied of late; and although in many respects much more candid and satisfactory than former works, some errors are continued in them and propagated, even by writers of reputation, to the present day.

Probably few public characters have suffered more from attempts to tarnish their posthumous fame in the minds of posterity than William Penn, the proprietor and founder of the province of Pennsylvania. The emanation, from highly respectable quarters, of misrepresentations and insinuations highly prejudicial to the character of a man so great and good, is much to be regretted. Yet, in the ordering of Divine Providence, 'all things work together for good,' and these aspersions may have had, in some instances the opposite effect to that intended. I doubt not they have induced others, as they have the compiler, to institute closer search into the history and real character of the defamed, and to ascertain how far assertions or insinuations are borne out by fact. If the whole case be examined into with an eye of impartial investigation, some of the charges made will be found to consist of gross misrepresentations, whilst ~~other~~ points of attack are quite untenable.

It was a noble, self-sacrificing spirit, to say the least of it, on the part of Penn, to renounce a splendid career of worldly honour and exalted rank, to spend a large portion of his life and energies, and the whole of a rich inheritance, to found a great asylum in the wilderness for the poor and oppressed of all nations, where every one might worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, whilst he himself was reduced to poverty and a prison.

The confidential letters passed between William Penn, and his secretary James Logan, evince throughout an earnest desire, on the part of the former, for the best welfare of his infant colony. Perhaps no more effectual method could be adopted for exploding error and misrepresentations, than bringing to light the contemporary evidences, which have been suffered too much to slumber in darkness; no one having yet taken the pains to bring them forth to tell their tale of the past to the present generation, and throw a little gleam of light into the obscure shades of bygone days.

Had some of the facts which are developed in the MS. proprietary correspondence been more generally known, there can be no doubt that several misrepresentations, in relation to the acts and motives of William Penn and the Friends of Pennsylvania, handed down from old opponents, reiterated by writers on the history of the province, and recently revived under cover of high authority, might have been prevented.

To do this is no part of my present intention, further than to illustrate the character of one who occupied a prominent station in the early history of Pennsylvania, and who conducted himself with such becoming propriety as a Christian legislator. Of all the associates of William Penn in the administration of his colonial government, James Logan ever proved his most faithful and confidential friend. It is to the latter especially that the following pages are intended to refer; and it is hoped that some justice, though tardy, may at length be awarded to one whose character is so well worthy of being preserved from oblivion—

not only for his learning, but for his ability in conducting some of the most arduous offices in the Government of Pennsylvania, at a time when such men were of immense value.

In no instance did William Penn manifest his own discernment and tact for business more, than when, at great pains, he persuaded James Logan to accompany him to his new Province, and take part in the administration; and a most pleasing trait in the character of the latter was his upright conduct in the absence of Penn from the Colony, and at all other times in defending him from the encroachments of those who ought, in justice and gratitude, to have been among the foremost to support him.

James Logan was certainly one of the best and most learned of the whole number of the early emigrants to the American continent, and he became one of the greatest benefactors of Pennsylvania. Besides being appointed Secretary to the Province, he filled, with great ability and integrity, the offices of Commissioner of Property, Chief Justice, and for nearly two years, that of Governor of the Province, as Secretary of the Council. His intellect was powerful, and his acquirements considerable, being well versed in ancient and modern learning, acquainted with the Oriental tongues, and master of the Greek, Latin, French, and Italian languages. He was deeply skilled in the mathematics, and in natural and moral philosophy, and was the author of several works in Latin and English. He was a great patron of learning, held an extensive correspondence with the literati of Europe, and, at his death, he bequeathed a library of 3000 volumes as a legacy to his countrymen, consisting of the best works in various languages, arts, and sciences; a splendid and durable monument of his munificence, and of his attachment to Pennsylvania.

Whilst greatly distinguished for learning, James Logan was a man of sterling integrity, a worthy and consistent Friend, preserving, through life a character for strict piety and uprightness. He was the intimate friend and correspondent of

Thomas Story, a distinguished minister amongst Friends. Some of the letters passed between them are now first printed in the following pages from the original MSS., collated and arranged for that purpose, including several to and from William Penn, his widow Hannah Penn, and others, the compilation of which has involved the perusal of a considerable number of papers and private correspondence. For several letters and incidental remarks, I am indebted to the pages of two volumes of the *Philadelphia Friend*, containing selections from the proprietary letters preserved in MS. at Stenton. Thomas Thompson, of Liverpool, I have to thank for the use of a MS. correspondence between Thomas Story and James Logan; and Thomas Wise, jun., of Bayswater, for important references.

In conclusion, I wish to draw the reader's attention to some religious reflections addressed by James Logan 'to himself,' which, from their intrinsic excellence, I have made the conclusion of these pages. They are replete with instruction, and bear ample and beautiful testimony that the writer was a man of eminent piety.

W. A.

MEMOIRS OF JAMES LOGAN.

JAMES LOGAN was descended from a family who, according to history, were for many years distinguished in Scotland, and of which there are many interesting facts connected with its antiquity and distinction. It appears from the *Scotsman's Library*, and the *Memoirs of the Somervilles*, that the name of Logan is one of those derived from locality, and hence deemed the more honourable. It occurs in Scotch history at the early period of William the Lion; and throughout subsequent ages is connected with important national transactions. The chief Logan was Baron of Restalrig, and this house was connected, by various intermarriages, with most of the noble families in the kingdom, and even with royalty itself; one of them having married a daughter of Robert II., who granted him the lands of Grugar, by a charter addressed '*Militi dilecto fratri suo.*'

Several interesting particulars are recorded in the history of this unfortunate and redoubtable clan. In 1329, when that solemn embassy was undertaken, in compliance with the death-bed request of the great king, Robert Bruce—that his heart might be taken to the holy sepulchre—Sir Robert Logan and Sir Walter Logan were the chief associates of Sir James Douglas in that illustrious band which comprised the flower of Scotch chivalry. The fatal termination of this mission under the walls of Grenada, where an excess of heroism led them to battle with the Moors, finished in martial glory the career of most of the troop; and, in attempting the rescue of their friend, the Lord Sinclair, the Logans fell in the thickest of the fight.

Some centuries ago, the Scotch navy was able to cope with that of England; and, in 1400, Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig, Lord Admiral of Scotland, defeated an English fleet in the Firth of Forth. On the return of King James I. from his captivity in England, he knighted the Laird of Restalrig, and made him Sheriff Principal of Edinburgh. Another Logan was invested Lord Provost of Edinburgh in 1520, an honour which he well merited. In 1555, Mary of Lorraine, intending to erect Leith into a royal burgh, purchased the superiority from Logan; but, being dethroned, the town council of Edinburgh, who were jealous of its rising importance, took possession of it by an armed force, and claim to this day the superiority.

Sir Robert Logan, Baron of Restalrig, who married a daughter of Lord John Somerville, was the owner of Fast Castle, on the borders of the German Ocean, in Scotland, and was connected with the troubles of that country occasioned by the affair of the Earl of Gowrie. The strange and illegal accusation of Baron Logan, in 1608, eight years after his death, for an alleged participation in the 'Gowrie conspiracy,' and the singular trial of his mouldering remains, are amongst the most mysterious transactions of King James's reign. The sentence of 'Guilty' threw his forfeited estates into the hands of the Earl of Dunbar, and extinguished a large debt which Balmerino owed to the family. The proscription of the name of Sprot, the only accuser, who was hanged for his perjury, was the last act of this tragedy.

The reduced circumstances of the Logans, consequent upon the confiscation of their estates, which were considerable, induced the sons of the unfortunate Baron to leave the country, and they fixed their residence at Lurgan, in Ireland. Robert, the younger son, subsequently returned to Scotland, where he settled. His son, Patrick Logan, was educated for a clergyman, receiving the benefit of a good education in the university of Edinburgh, where he received the degree of Master of Arts. But, though educated for the 'church,' and having served some time as a chaplain, he relinquished his clerical profession and returned to Ireland, where he afterwards joined in religious