



Wiltshire Quakers in Massachusetts & Philadelphia

Names mentioned in the following articles:

Bailey, Daniel
Bailey, Joel
Bancroft
Beale, William
Bezer, Edward
Bezer, John
Bezer, Sarah
Brothers, Sarah
Brothers, John
Coole, William
Cope

Draper, Ambrose
Evans, Catherine
Gibbens, John
Gibbons, John
Godwin, Walter
Hickman
Hickman, Francis
Hilliard, Mary
Hilliard, Philip
Hilliard, Richard
Hilliard, Richard (son)
Hitchcock, William
Penn, William

Peters, William
Pile, Robert
Smith, Francis
Taylor, John
Tucker, Richard
Tyler, Jonathan
Varney, Bridget
Varney, Humphrey
Varney, Thomas
Varney, William
Withers, Ralph
Witt, John

When in Philadelphia this year (1904) I made some search in Friends' Libraries to supplement the information given on page 139, as to Wilts Quakers in Pennsylvania, and the part they took in founding that state.

---- Cope, ancestor of the Philadelphia family of the same name, was from Kennett, Wilts, or elsewhere in the parish of Avebury. He appears to have been a tailor, but there is no evidence confirmatory in Avebury records. It is not certain he was a Quaker in England.

John Bezer, a Commissioner, and later a Justice of the Peace. He was one of Penn's first Commissioners to fix on the site of the proposed city - Philadelphia.

Richard Hilliard, Mary his wife, Richard and Philip sons, John Witt, servant – probably from Alderbury, near Salisbury, where there is yet the remains of a Quaker burial ground. The Hilliards were probably convinced by Catherine Evans, who preached in Salisbury Market Place about 1654. She was whipped on the bare back for her trouble. Was afterwards imprisoned in the inquisition at Malta, from whence she wrote to her husband, a merchant in Bristol, 11 mo. (Nov) 1661 :- “Our dear love to E. H., with her husband and children at Alderbury”.

Richard Tucker, from Warminster, settled at Darby, Pa., 1683.

Francis Smith (mentioned on page 140) bought 500 acres of land.

John Gibbons arrived from Warminster, 1681.

Joel Bailey was supposed to have come from Wilts.

Daniel Bailey, Bromham, bought land, but did not come.

William Beale, from Calne, 1728.

Jonathan Tyler, of Wilts, 1695, twenty-six years of age, travelled three years in America as a preacher, and convinced many.

Ralph Withers, from Bishop's Cannings. In 1683 he was a member of the first Provincial Committee. He appears to have been a Friend in 1657, and to have signed the Epistles from London Yearly Meeting in 1675 and 1681.

Wm. Coole, of Devizes, writing to his sister Sarah, widow of Wm. Bezer, 1683, says:- “I sent letters when John Gibbens, Robert Pile and Edward Bezer went”.

One Hickman wrote letters to some early settlers from Marlborough, Wilts. One, dated 6 Feb 1684, to Wm. Hitchcock. A Francis Hickman and wife had arrived before Nov. 27th 1685.

Godwin Walter is noted as being in Wilts, 1685, and three months later had arrived in Pennsylvania.

John Taylor, supposed to have come from Wiltshire, in 1684.
Some of the names above are found among the records of Friends who suffered for their religious principles in Wilts. I think the inference suggested by the incomplete records of arrivals from Wilts is that our county may claim a considerable share in Wm. Penn's experiment across the seas. The character of the settlers may be inferred from the statement of Bancroft :- Not a drop of Quaker blood was ever shed by an Indian.

Source WN&Q V5 p21. Alfred Cook, Pewsey, Wilts.

Queries – Varney. - I am informed that William Varney and Bridget his wife came from Wiltshire; they appear in the Massachusetts records of Salem and Ipswich about 1650, but I have reason to think they came over somewhat earlier. They had five or six children, of whom Humphrey and Thomas were the sons, the latter being born in 1641, but whether in this country or in England I have been unable to learn. Any information you can give me regarding this branch of the Varney family I shall not only be grateful, for, but am willing to pay for.

Source WN&Q V5 p43. G. E. Varney, Dover, N. H., U.S.A.

An Early Wilts Settler in New England, - From a deed of 1764, which happens to have come under my notice, it appears that in 1681 John Brothers, of Lavington, in Wiltshire, purchased, some 250 acres of land in Pennsylvania, from William Penn. His daughter, Elizabeth, married Ambrose Draper, and their son Ambrose eventually sold the land to William Peters, of Philadelphia. Is anything further known of these parties, or do their names occur among Wilts Quakers ?. Draper seems to be a local surname in Lavington or its immediate neighbourhood.

An Early Wilts Settler in New England: I have looked through the Digest of Quaker Registers for Wiltshire, and do not find any entry of either "Brothers" or "Draper".

Source WN&Q V4 p466, SAGE & 575, Norman Penny