

**"FAR DISTANT FROM FRIENDS":
THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURY QUAKERS OF SETAUKET, N.Y.**

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Only a few miles from the Meeting House of Conscience Bay Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends lies a busy secondary road called Quaker Path. That a road called Quaker Path lies a few miles from a Friends Meeting House might not seem unusual. But Conscience Bay Monthly Meeting was established in 1962, when Quaker Path had already been in existence more than two hundred years. Brookhaven Town Records describe its location as follows:

We ye Commissioners for ye time being Do assert and Lay out a highway four Rods wide leading in ye usual place where ye path now goes from ye Brook by Daniel Biggs to ye old field Gate; and from thence to Crane's Neck leading by the old field fence; and also another highway from Richard Woodhull's Mill running in ye usual place four Rods wide leading by Doctor Muirson's house and Joshua Longbottom's to ye first mentioned road to ye old field gate; and also one other highway turning out of ye said road from ye said mill on ye hill at ye corner of Nathaniel Biggs, deceased, home lot running four rods wide from ye said corner by ye clay hole until it comes to ye former road leading by Capt. Hawkins to Stony Brook; and also a road turning out of this above said road at ye corner of ye home lot formerly possessed by Joseph Satterly and now in ye possession of George Davis called ye Quaker Path so running two rods wide to ye house formerly John Hallock's..."^{1 1*}

Those who recognize the references to the "old field" and Crane's Neck will immediately realize that those roads identified on June 23, 1760 are roads leading from what is now the Village of Old Field, on Conscience Bay, toward the Village of Stony Brook.

It is interesting to note that only Quaker Path was accorded a name in spite of the fact that it was only half the width of the first two designated roadways. This road had apparently been in existence for some time. The beginning of the entry quoted above refers to roads which had been neglected and a description written March 27, 1712 makes reference to "a highway laid along by ye clay pit and so by John Hallock, Jr. and so to Stony Brook four rod wide."²

It is the reference to John Hallock that provides the reason for the name. John Hallock, Sr. settled in Setauket in 1687 after having married Abigail Swazey in 1678 in Southold. The will of his father, William Hallock, dated February 10, 1682, denies John his inheritance for marrying "a Quakeress" and subscribing to her religion.³ And a genealogical sketch of the family refers to "the neat buildings of John Hallock and his son, John Hallock, Jr [where] for more than a century were held the Friends committee meetings and their monthly meetings, but later discontinued."⁴

But the story of Friends in Setauket goes back even beyond John Hallock's arrival, although the earliest Friends to settle there are somewhat difficult to document. In the late 1650s, when the first settlers arrived, Friends had not yet begun to keep membership records. It is possible to obtain clues only through public records of the Colonies of Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Haven, New Netherlands, and New York.

In discussing these records, it is helpful to remember that when Setauket (known also as Brookhaven and sometimes Ashford or Cromwell Bay) was originally settled, it was under the jurisdiction of the theocratic New Haven Colony, which governed all of what is now Suffolk County. The Dutch controlled the rest of Long Island and Nassau County did not exist until 1899, so that Queens County reached to the Suffolk border.

The Setauket settlers seem to have been dissenters from the established Puritan Church who sought a less restrictive atmosphere in which to carry on their lives. They petitioned the slightly more secular Connecticut Colony of Hartford to accept them in 1659 and were finally annexed in 1661.

¹*Spelling and punctuation will be modernized throughout this paper for the reader's convenience.

In 1664 the Dutch surrendered to Col. Richard Nicolls, who was then appointed Governor of the colony newly named New York in honor of the Duke of York, brother of Charles II. Charles granted his brother all of Long Island, thus making Suffolk County part of the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Yet the story of the Quakers of Brookhaven really begins in the religious ferment of Seventeenth Century England, where theological turmoil spawned a wide variety of movements intended to reform the Anglican Church.

In 1647, 23-year-old George Fox, sorely troubled by the differences between what he perceived as Biblical Truth and the practices of the Churches, both Anglican and Puritan, had what he came to refer to as a religious "opening". A voice came to him saying, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition."⁵

From this opening grew his conviction that there is that of God in every person, accessible by a form of prayer in which the individual waits quietly to hear the Voice Within.

In Fox's religion, there would be no "hireling clergy" to interpret God's word. Individuals would share their "leadings" with one another and when all were sufficiently convinced that God had indeed spoken, appropriate action would be taken on any given issue. Among these early "corporate discernments" were the idea that children were not tainted by Original Sin, that authority figures were no more than ordinary people and should not be paid special tribute such as removing one's hat before judge or king (only God deserved that tribute), that all men and women were equal in God's love, that Scripture was an important guide, but not a final revelation.

The idea of individuals, privately or corporately, interpreting God's word was, of course, extremely disturbing to the religious establishment. And these early Friends (who called themselves "Friends of Truth" or "Friends of the Light", but came to be called, derisively, "Quakers", because they "trembled before the Lord"), once convinced that God had spoken, did not hesitate to make His Word known to the public at every opportunity.

In the belief that God did not require a "Steeple House" in order to be present, they would hold outdoor gatherings, sometimes attracting hundreds of people. They would disrupt church services by striding to the pulpit and arguing forcefully with the ministers.

It is little wonder that the established authorities, unable to silence them with laws restricting their preaching, began whipping and jailing them, both in England and in the New World.

On Long Island, the persecution of Quakers was felt both in the Dutch colony of New Netherlands and in the English settlements far to the east.

In 1657, five Friends disembarked from the ship *Woodhouse* at New Amsterdam and set about preaching. The Dutch Reformed clergy were highly agitated, not only by the ideas set forth, but by the fact that three of the five were women. Two of these women (Mary Weatherhead and Dorothy Waugh) were quickly imprisoned for preaching in the streets and banished. Meanwhile, Robert Hodgson, Richard Doudney and Sarah Gibbons preached at Gravesend and Hempstead (both English settlements within Dutch territory). Doudney and Gibbons stayed only a short time before going on to Rhode Island, but Hodgson was seized by the sheriff, tied to the rear of a cart and dragged twenty miles to the ferry to New Amsterdam (now Manhattan), where he was jailed and starved, hung by his hands with weights on his feet, and beaten. When townsmen offered to raise the ransom for his release, Hodgson refused on the grounds that he was innocent of wrongdoing. Finally, in exasperation, Gov. Stuyvesant banished him and, determined that such disruption should not happen again, he enacted an anti-Quaker ordinance and forbade Friends Meetings.⁶

Friends ideas soon took hold, however, and in 1658, Henry Townsend of Flushing was fined for allowing Friends to meet in his house. When he refused to pay the fine, he was jailed and beaten. The English citizens of Flushing, angry at what they perceived as a violation of their own human rights, wrote and signed what is considered the first colonial document extolling religious liberty, the Flushing Remonstrance:

You have been pleased to send up unto us a certain Prohibition or Command that we should not receive or entertain any of those people called Quakers because they are supposed to be

by some seducers of the people. For our part we cannot condemn them in this case neither can we stretch out our hands against them to punish, banish, or persecute them, for out of Christ God is a Consuming fire and it is fearful to fall into the hands of the living God. We desire therefore in this case not to judge lest we be judged.... We are bound by the Law to do good unto all men especially to those of the Household of faith....

The law of love, peace and liberty...extending to Jews, Turks and Egyptians as they are Considered the sons of Adam, which is the glory of the outward State of Holland, so love, peace and liberty extending to all in Christ Jesus Condemns hatred, war and bondage ...our desire is not to offend one of his little ones in whatsoever form name or title he appears in whether Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist or Quaker, but shall be glad to see anything of God in any of them.... Therefore if any of these said persons come in love unto us we cannot in Conscience lay violent hands upon them, but give free Egress and Regress into our Town and houses as God shall persuade our Consciences and in this we are true subjects both of Church and State, for we are bound by the law of God and man to do good unto all men and evil to no man and this is according to the Patent and Charter of our Town given unto us in the name of the States General which we are not willing to infringe and violate but shall hold to our patent and shall remain your Humble Subjects.... 27th December in the year 1657... ⁷

The signers of the Remonstrance were severely punished with loss of government employment and/or banishment from the colony. *Schout* (Sheriff) Tobias Feake, for example, was fired and banished when he confessed that he

"received an order from the Hon. Director-General, not to admit, lodge and entertain in the said village any one of the heretical and abominable sect called Quakers, but has nevertheless had the audacity, in contempt of the said order...to be a leader and instigator in the conception of a seditious, mutinous and detestable letter of defiance...signed by himself and his complices and by him retained and then delivered to the Director-General, wherein they justify and uphold the abominable sect of Quakers, who vilify both the political authorities and the Ministers of the Gospel and undermine the State and God's service, and absolutely demand, that all sects, especially the said abominable and heretical sect of Quakers shall and must be tolerated and admitted; all of which is directly contrary and repugnant to the above referred to orders...which he pursuant to his oath, official position and duty, as...*Schout*...should by all means have upheld."⁸

In 1661, John Bowne, defying the Ordinance as Townsend had done, also allowed Friends to meet at his home in Flushing. He was imprisoned and then banished to Holland, where he took his cause to the Dutch West India Company which governed the colony. He returned to New Amsterdam with a message from the directors reading, "It is our opinion that the consciences of men...ought ever to remain free and unshackled".⁹

Simultaneously, severe intolerance toward Quakers came to eastern Long Island under the governments of Puritan New England. In a sense, persecution of Quakers in New England began before there were Quakers in New England or, for that matter, in Old England. A decade before George Fox's "opening", Anne Hutchinson and others of like mind were preaching a doctrine called Antinomianism in Massachusetts Bay Colony. This doctrine was in direct contrast to the Puritan belief in pre-destination and salvation only through strict adherence to Scripture. It was grounded in the idea that God's Grace is available to all, even sinners.¹⁰

In 1638, Anne Hutchinson was tried for "traducing the ministers" and she and her followers were banished from the colony. They soon settled in Rhode Island, where Roger Williams, though not an Antinomian, would soon establish a government based on religious toleration. Anne Hutchinson went on

shortly afterward to settle with her family in the Dutch territory which later became Westchester County, NY and was killed there in an Indian raid. (The Hutchinson River is named in her honor.) However, many of her Antinomian followers would soon be exposed to Quaker preachers and take up the new religion.

In July of 1656, the first English Quakers, Mary Fisher and Ann Austin, arrived in Boston, and two days after they left, eight more arrived, by way of Barbados, on the *Speedwell* (about which more will be said later). The two women were held for a month and searched for "witch marks" in the belief that their religion was surely a sign of the Devil. The *Speedwell* passengers were jailed and then banished.

As a result of this new threat to the Puritan theocracy, anti-Quaker ordinances such as this one, dated September 23, 1658, went into effect throughout Puritan-controlled New England:

Whereas there is an accursed and pernicious sect of heretics lately risen up in the world, who are commonly called Quakers, who take upon them to be immediately sent of God and infallibly assisted, who do speak and write blasphemous things despising government and the order of God in church and commonwealth, speaking evil of dignitaries, reproaching and reviling magistrates and ministers of the gospel, seeking to turn the people from the faith, and to gain proselytes to their pernicious ways; and whereas the several jurisdictions have made diverse laws to prohibit and restrain the aforesaid cursed heretics from coming among them, yet notwithstanding they are not deterred thereby, but arrogantly and presumptuously do press into several of the jurisdictions and there vent their pernicious and devilish opinions, which being permitted, tends manifestly to the disturbance of our peace, the withdrawing of the hearts of the people from their subjection and government and so in issue to cause division and ruin if not timely prevented. It is, therefore, propounded and seriously commended to the several general courts upon the considerations aforesaid, to make a law that all such Quakers formerly convicted and punished as such shall, if they return again, be imprisoned and forthwith banished or expelled out of the said jurisdiction under pain of death and if afterwards they presume to come again into that jurisdiction then to be put to death as presumptuously incorrigible unless they shall plainly and publicly renounce their cursed opinions....¹¹

It was not long before whipping, branding and banishment became standard treatment, but Friends' belief in the rightness of their "leadings" was so strong that many of them would return again and again to "look their bloody laws in the face."

Between these brutal trips some found sanctuary by sojourning on Shelter Island, between Long Island's twin forks, where Nathaniel Sylvester and his family established a refuge. Among those who sought such respite was Mary Dyer, who in 1660 would become one of four people, and the only woman, to be hanged on Boston Common under the anti-Quaker laws.

Nathaniel Sylvester, with his brother Constant, Thomas Middleton and Thomas Rouse, had purchased Shelter Island in 1651. He had come by way of Holland and Barbados and was the only one of the four who chose to live there. In 1652, he married Grissel Brinley, daughter of Thomas Brinley, Esq. who was auditor to Charles II and lost his estates for assisting in the King's escape to France when overthrown by Cromwell.¹² It is possible that Grissel Brinley Sylvester's letters to her father were partially responsible for the speed with which Charles II was to grant religious liberty to Quakers when he regained the throne. (The Sylvesters' influence was also apparently felt by William Coddington, Governor of Newport, which later became Rhode Island Colony. He married Grissel's sister, Anne, in 1652 and became a convinced Friend before 1670.)

Nathaniel Sylvester, as early as 1654, was accused of "offensive carriage on the Sabbath" and a few years later, learning that there was an order barring him from the Southold settlement, threatened to "pistol" anyone who tried to keep him out. In 1660 the General Court of New Haven tried to seize Shelter Island from Sylvester because of

"sundry calumnious and opprobrious speeches uttered at Southold against ye courts and magistrates...also that himself (professing to be a Quaker) hath been a frequent harbinger to give entertainment to that cursed sect, who from his island have frequently taken opportunity to come amongst our people, sowing the seeds of their pernicious doctrines, and sometimes by gross affronts, publicly to make a disturbance at Southold; all which practices are highly offensive, dishonorable to God and contrary to law, and not to be suffered."¹³

For the settlers of Setauket the Sylvesters' importance lies in their having drawn those oppressed New England Quakers to Shelter Island. Some settled on the North Fork. Others, such as John Rouse and Humphrey Norton, passing through, convinced early North Fork settlers to become Friends.

Son of Thomas Rouse, a Barbados sugar planter who purchased Shelter Island with Sylvester, John Rouse was, in 1658, one of three Friends whose right ears were cut off for refusing to remain in banishment from Massachusetts. Humphrey Norton was among the Friends who had been aboard the *Woodhouse* when it landed in New Amsterdam. He had gone on to Plymouth Colony from which he was banished in 1657 and then was sent from Southold to prison in New Haven in 1658, where his hand was branded with the letter H (Heretic) for loudly denouncing Southold's minister, Rev. John Youngs. (One of Youngs' sons, in fact, was a complainant about Sylvester's "pistoling" threat).

The influence of such Quaker evangelists was soon to be felt in the new settlement at Setauket. As early as 1659, English Friend John Taylor wrote in his travel journal:

It pleased the Lord so to order my way, that I found in several towns and villages a pretty many fine, sober people that feared God and were convinced of the blessed Truth. They did receive me and my testimony readily with gladness. Many meeting of the people were settled under the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, our free Teacher, at Gravesend, Setauket, Oyster Bay, Hempstead and other places, sometimes in the woods and wilderness."¹⁴

The first Quaker to arrive in Setauket, however, is thought not to be one of those influenced by such traveling evangelists. He was Richard "Bull" Smith, who would later found Smithtown where a March 7, 1665 deed confirmation refers to him as "Quaker Smith".¹⁵

In September, 1656, Richard Smith, then a 43-year-old resident of Southampton, LI, was a passenger on the *Speedwell* when it arrived in Boston (see above). It is believed that he had been convinced (the term Friends use instead of "converted") by William Dewsbury during a trip home to England in 1654.¹⁶ He, like the other Quaker passengers, was arrested and when he was banished, the order stated that he must return to Long Island by boat, so as not to corrupt any citizens he might encounter by going over land through New England.¹⁷

The following month, October, 1656, Smith was banished from Southampton for "unreverend carriage toward the magistrates" (which probably meant that he refused to remove his hat in court) and referred to as "an emissary of Satan, a Quaker."¹⁸

With his wife Sarah (Folger), he was one of the earliest settlers at Setauket, moving later to his lands at Smithtown (then called either Nesaquake or Smithfield) after his 1663 purchase. His conviction, however, seems to have been short-lived, as by 1666, he was involved in raising a levy to support a minister serving Smithtown and Setauket settlements.¹⁹

Arthur Smith (apparently no relation), however, was another of Setauket's earliest settlers and one who did stick to his Quaker beliefs. He moved with his wife Martha from Southold to Setauket in 1659 after a May 23 trial at New Haven where he was sentenced to be whipped and to post bond as a promise to recant. Excerpts from his trial transcript appear below:

...it was demanded how he came to be corrupted with ye opinions of the Quakers to which he answered that he knew not that he was corrupted.

Joseph Horton, Jr: this deponent saith that Arthur Smith affirmed... that if men would attend to that light is within them, it would lead or bring them to heaven... He affirmed that there is no devil, either before or in Adam's time... He affirmed that either infants had no sin, or were charged with none until they sin actually... He affirmed that he had no governor nor teacher but God.

Thomas Mapes: this deponent saith that Arthur Smith affirmed... that men's laws are corrupt... that having demanded of Arthur why ye Quakers gazed or stared so in the faces of men & women, he answered him, that by looking on man they could tell whether they had the mark of the beast to be seen in their forehead & right hand.

Charles Glover: this deponent saith that Arthur Smith affirmed... he who you call your minister or teacher knoweth no more of the world's churches than this child, pointing to one of his children..., moreover that he was not to submit to men's laws; to whom this deponent replied that he must be subject to government in what part of the world soever he liveth... lest he be brought himself & family to misery, his answer was, what have I to do with that?

Philemon Dickerson: this deponent saith while he opposed Arthur in his nullifying of magistracy & ministry, alleging the text of Ephesians 4, when Christ ascended on high, he gave gifts to men, Arthur replied that though there were gifts given to men, yet there was no power & that men take power on themselves & it is usurped power, further Arthur said that their teaching was none of his teacher; and upon further reasoning affirmed that children have no sin till they acted in their own person.

Arthur Smith being examined and required to give answers... the court finding his answers to be both profane, absurd, conceited, and ridiculous, he was warned to take heed of dallying with ye fundamental truths of God & was told that the court looked upon him as a man of profane spirit and disorderly way, that would overthrow the order & government that God hath established in church and commonwealth... It was ordered that he be whipped and bonded for a bond of 50 pounds for his good behavior for the time to come, to carry it in a comely & inoffensive manner, which if he did not, he is to appear here at this court of magistrates again October next, if he be not removed out of this jurisdiction in the meantime. ²⁰

Refusing to be governed by any but God, in October, 1659 Arthur Smith sold the home he had lived in for 19 years and moved with his family to Setauket where some of his descendants still reside.

Arthur Smith had been one of the earliest settlers of Southold. The history of that settlement begins in 1640 and Arthur Smith is on record as witnessing a deed that very first year.²¹ Some believe he is the Arthur Smith who was badly wounded in the Pequot Wars in 1637 at Mystic Fort in Connecticut ²²

In Setauket, he proved to be just as outspoken as he had been in Southold, going on record as the only resident opposing Connecticut Colony Orders on August 1, 1662.²³ It is not clear which of the Orders were objectionable to Arthur Smith. However, one which would certainly have offended him was the Order that each town must support a minister.²⁴ And again, in 1666, he was "set in the stocks, there to continue till the rising of the court, with a paper pinned on his breast declaring...that he did not acknowledge the King to be his King, nor the Government to be his Government."²⁵

Unlike several of the other very early Quaker settlers who moved on to Oyster Bay, Arthur Smith remained in Setauket, where he apparently died before 1673 as Martha is noted as a widow that year in whose keeping was the will of her neighbor, William Fancy.²⁶ His home was described near the turn of the 20th Century as "against the great rock beside the road a short distance, southwest of where a descendant of Arthur, a Miss Julia S. Smith lives in the two century house, on the old home lot. In back (up the Hill) is Arthur

Smith's private burial ground, with the ancient graves marked with small field stones, some with crude initials carved on them."²⁷

It appears that Arthur Smith, Katherine Fancy, and Robert Smith (who came with his wife Alice to Setauket from Southold in 1667) were siblings. In 1682 Robert Smith deeded his entire estate to Hannah Goulsbery, wife of Robert Goulsbery and daughter of William and Katherine Fancy.²⁸ Arthur Smith's son, Arthur, Jr. witnessed a deed by Peter Whitehair (Whittier) and his wife Rachel Fancy, daughter of William and Katherine in 1686. Whether Robert Smith or Katherine Fancy followed the Quaker religion is unknown. There is an intriguing reference to monies being paid out in 1680 for the relief of a "distressed Quaker" in Setauket's Newtown (now East Setauket)²⁹ which could relate to a series of references in Brookhaven records about the care of William and Katherine's son, Samuel Fancy, who was clearly incapacitated by 1682³⁰

Arthur Smith's descendants do not appear to have remained Quakers for very long or may never have followed his religious persuasion. His son Benjamin, for example, was a member of a committee charged with choosing a site for the Presbyterian parsonage in 1689³¹ and Albin Smith, the family historian, believes that a Deborah Smith baptized at the age of 21 at Grace Episcopal Church in Jamaica in 1710 was the daughter of Arthur's son John.³²

Also among the earliest settlers in Setauket were John and Elizabeth Feake Underhill. Capt. John Underhill may well be the most colorful and notorious of early inhabitants of Setauket and his second wife was the daughter of a woman so infamous that a historical novel, *The Winthrop Woman* by Anya Seton, was based on her life.

John Underhill had served in Holland and married a Dutch woman, Helena Kruger/De Hooch. In America they settled first in New England in 1630, where he was appointed Military Instructor for the Massachusetts Bay Colony and was sent to Connecticut to "put the [Pequot] Indians to the sword"³³. He was frequently in trouble with the authorities on charges ranging from adultery to following the religious teachings of Anne Hutchinson (see above). In 1641 he was banished for heresy. The citizens of Stamford, CT hired him as their military leader, in which capacity he led a massacre of 500 Indians near Greenwich. He was soon in New Netherlands where, as Jan van der Hyl³⁴, he was commander of the English troops under Dutch authority, brutally killing Long Island's Massapeguas and Canarsies.

One story from this period tells how a drunken Capt. John Underhill, along with Capt. Thomas Willet (probably the forebear of the Quaker Willets of Albertson and Islip, NY), broke up a dinner party in the back room of City Tavern in 1642, thus gaining a reputation as "mettlesome and forceful."³⁵

By 1648, John Underhill was Sheriff of Flushing, but he was banished from the Dutch territory in 1653 for raising the English flag at Hempstead and challenging "the iniquitous government" of Peter Stuyvesant.³⁶

He went on to Southold where his wife Helena died in 1658. He sold his Southold property in 1659³⁷ and settled in Setauket with his new wife, Elizabeth.

While it is unclear whether Capt. John Underhill ever declared himself a Friend, it is clear that he leaned in that direction, having been a follower of Antinomianism. Although his swashbuckling lifestyle does not seem in keeping with our image of the pacifist Quaker, it should be remembered that in those early days, even George Fox had not yet fully developed the Peace Testimony and that a great many military men seem to have become Friends in this period. Perhaps Fox would have said to Underhill as he is reported to have said to William Penn, "Wear thy sword as long as thou canst," meaning that the burden of killing others would soon become too much to bear. And it should be noted that Underhill's son by Helena, John, Jr., refused in 1676 to train in the militia³⁸ and appears in New York MM records as early as 1668 when he married Mary Prior (see below).³⁹

There is no question about the Quaker and dissenter connections of Capt. Underhill's new wife. Elizabeth Feake was the daughter of Robert Feake and the "Winthrop Woman", Elizabeth Fones-Winthrop-Feake-Hallet. She was considerably younger than Capt. John and had probably met him when he was military leader in the Stamford/Greenwich area, where her father was one of the two founders of Greenwich. Among her connections were her first cousin, Tobias Feake, who led the signing of the Flushing Remonstrance (see above), her sister Hannah Feake who married John Bowne (also above) and "died in London in the service

of Truth",⁴⁰ her brother John Feake, prominent at Matinecock Meeting from its earliest days, and her mother's third husband, William Hallet, who had been banished from the Province of New Netherlands in 1653 for "allowing conventicles and gatherings" of dissenters [apparently Anabaptists] at his home in Flushing⁴¹.

It appears that Underhill's move from Setauket to Oyster Bay was occasioned by harsh treatment given Elizabeth and John, Jr. at Setauket for their religious persuasion. In an April 12, 1665 letter to Elizabeth's second cousin, Governor of Connecticut Colony, John Winthrop, Jr., John Underhill explains,

"You shall ever find my real heart to your Colony, and should not have showed myself an obstructor of your power, but that my wife and son being Quakers, were greatly abused by sordid [assorted?] spirits under your authority at Setauket, pretending your laws bound them to it, as they were Quaker."⁴²

Mary Prior, mentioned above, who married John Underhill, Jr., was the daughter of another early Setauket couple, Matthew and Mary Prior.

The story of the Priors' sojourn in Setauket is interwoven with the infamous tale of Capt. John Scott, who appeared in Setauket in 1662. Much has been written about the career of John Scott, privateer, attorney, land speculator, and one-time indentured servant to Quakers Laurence and Cassandra Southwick⁴³ who died in exile on Shelter Island. His life story seems to weave in and out of Quaker connections (which did not stop him from taking part in the action of liable against Nathaniel Sylvester's threat to "pistol" the people of Southold, mentioned above).

Scott came to Setauket with money for a land purchase provided by Daniel Gotherson, an English Friend whose wife, Lady Dorothea Scott (to whom John Scott claimed relation) was a well-known Quaker evangelist.⁴⁴ It appears that Gotherson had declared bankruptcy and, therefore, could not purchase the land in his own name. Scott made a large land purchase, encompassing the area from present-day Port Jefferson to Poquot. Gotherson sent as overseer for this land, Matthew Prior.⁴⁵ He also sent his own son, Daniel, Jr. who, along with several other young men, John Scott is reported to have sold into servitude to cover the cost of the voyage.⁴⁶

When Scott's claim to the land was declared fraudulent and he was jailed, first by Gov. Winthrop of Connecticut and then, when Long Island was granted to New York, by Gov. Nicolls, he managed to escape to Barbados, leaving his wife and family without support in his grand house at Scott's Cove. His holdings were confiscated to compensate his debtors and support his family.

Among those to whom Scott was indebted was Matthew Prior, who found that his job as overseer no longer existed, as Gotherson had never legally owned the land he oversaw and, in fact, Scott's purchases from Sachem Wyandanch were deemed invalid. On May 24, 1664, "Capt. Platt sold unto Matthew Prior the home lot that was [William] Fancy's by William Cramer's which Fancy sold to John Scott"⁴⁷ and on June 9, 1664, "the committee being informed of the great distress that Matthew Prior and his family are in and they bitterly complaining of great injury received from Mr. Scott, it is ordered that there be so much of the sequestered goods of Mr. Scott sold by the Constable... as will amount to £15 to procure said Prior 3 cows for relief of his present necessity...., these goods to be sold are glass and iron."⁴⁸

Nevertheless, on October 24, 1665, Matthew Prior chose to sell "his homelot with housing glass windows doors...fencing...young apple trees...to the Constable and the rest of the overseers for the Minister's accommodation named Mr. Brewster."⁴⁹

He was joining John Underhill who had purchased a large tract of land in Oyster Bay. Perhaps both Underhill and Prior were reacting to the pressure on Quakers to support a minister. The Town ruled on April 6, 1663, "...all inhabitants of Setauket shall be partners with Daniel Lane in the purchase of the land he bought of the Indians in the Little Neck [Strong's Neck] only excepted such persons as will not pay ministers rates."⁵⁰

Another early Quaker family associated with Setauket is that of James and Sarah Cock. James Cock had sold his land in Southold to Henry Case in 1658.⁵¹ His name appears on the undated, but very early, list of those who were expected to construct a fence for cattle in the Old Field at Setauket. On September 26,

1662, he was accused of trespass by Richard Smith⁵² (a frequent ploy to confirm land boundaries in those days). His Setauket land-holdings were confirmed April 2, 1663. In that confirmation, it is noted "he hath reserved all ye Privileges of John Dyer's lot in ye little Neck"⁵³. This confirmation came only four days before the notation about minister's rates and Little Neck purchasers, and perhaps he refused to pay those rates, thus causing the Town to make that ruling. He, too, settled in Oyster Bay, where he died in 1699 and Sarah died in 1715.⁵⁴

Another Quaker-related name appearing in Setauket very early is that of William Frost. In 1659 he was among the signers of the petition requesting affiliation of the Setauket settlement with Connecticut Colony⁵⁵ and in 1664 was granted property in the new settlement at Fire Place (now Mastic) and continued to purchase various parcels of Brookhaven land thereafter. During this period, however, he seems to have settled in Oyster Bay. His grant on September 26, 1672, of a new purchaser's accommodation between Mr. Brewster and Thomas Thorp identifies him as "of Oyster Bay"⁵⁶ But on January 15, 1673/4, Nathaniel Brewster acknowledged a debt to William Frost of Setauket which states, "the said William Frost may make use of (the new) dwelling house till the last of May next..."⁵⁷ which would indicate that Frost was living in Setauket at that time. He apparently returned to Oyster Bay soon afterward, however, purchasing a house at Matinecock from William Simson [another very early Setauket settler who moved to Oyster Bay].⁵⁸

William Frost was not, himself, a Quaker. When his son William married Matthew Prior's granddaughter Hannah and his son Wright married John Underhill's granddaughter Mary, both were listed in Westbury MM records as non-members.⁵⁹ However, William's wife, Rebecca Wright, was the daughter of Nicholas Wright, brother of Peter Wright⁶⁰ whose daughters Mary, Hannah and Lydia, Rebecca's cousins, were jailed in Boston in 1660 for protesting the execution of Quakers⁶¹ and/or in 1661 "for telling the court to lay aside 'carnal weapons' and stop slaughtering the Indians."⁶² (Mary Wright's wedding to Samuel Andrews in 1663, by the way, was the first Quaker wedding recorded on Long Island).⁶³

Another Quaker-related name appears in Setauket records when on January 11, 1672 John Swazey, Jr. purchased land from John Thomas "in case his brother [Joseph] comes to live upon it or otherwise to return to the disposing of the town again".⁶⁴ Their father, John, Sr. was one of the original purchasers of Setauket in 1655, but is invariably identified as "of Southold" in contemporary documents. his will, dated May 20, 1692 bequeaths to his son Joseph "one hundred acres of land upon which he is settled lying Westward of my son John's land & northward of my son Joseph's home lot" and to his son Samuel "ye land now in ye occupation of my son John lying between my son Joseph's & the home stall [John, Sr.'s home] which...I have given my son John."⁶⁵ This would indicate that John, Jr. and Joseph were at that time living on land adjacent to their father's in Southold Town (at Aquebogue where he settled in 1667).⁶⁶

The main significance of the Swazey name in early Setauket, however, comes with the 1687 settlement of John Hallock and his wife, Abigail Swazey, sister of John, Jr. and Joseph. She is the "Quakeress" whose marriage to his son so distressed William Hallock that he cut John from his will.

The Quaker background of the Swazeys goes back to the earliest appearance of Quakers on American soil. The first John Swazey, with sons John and Joseph are thought to have arrived in America in 1628 and settled in Salem, MA. When pressure on religious dissenters became too great, he and son John moved on to Southold. John, Sr. is on the Southold tax list as early as 1650 and John, Jr. sold his Salem property to his mother-in-law, Dorothy King in 1652 and joined his father. It is clear that they were dissenters, but unclear at what point they declared themselves Friends. In 1659, however, just at the time so many Friends were passing through Southold, and the same year as Arthur Smith's trial and the Underhills' departure, John, Sr. refused to take the Oath of Fidelity of New Haven Colony and was threatened with loss of property and imprisonment until he relented in 1660.⁶⁷ His son John had married in Salem Katherine King whose father William had identified himself with the Antinomians in 1637⁶⁸ and whose brother William had come to Boston to protest the treatment of fellow Quakers in 1659 and was sentenced to fifteen lashes, imprisonment and banishment.⁶⁹

The connection to the Quakers taking refuge on Shelter Island becomes clear when one remembers that Laurence and Cassandra Southwick had been leaders of the movement in Salem, of which Henry Fell (whose widow later married George Fox) wrote:

"In Plymouth patent there is a people not so rigid as the others at Boston and there are great desires among them after the Truth. Some there are, as I hear, convinced who meet in silence at a place called Salem. Oh truly great is the desire of my soul towards them and the love that flows out after them daily, for I see in the Eternal Light the Lord hath a great work to do in that nation."⁷⁰

The move of John and Abigail Swazey Hallock to Setauket in 1687 brought a resurgence of Quaker activity to the Town. As noted at the beginning of this paper, it was at their home and afterward at the home of their son, John, Jr., and later at the home of their grandson, Edward, that Friends meetings were held for about 100 years.

John Hallock, Sr. was born in 1658 in Aquebogue where the Swazey family was soon to settle. He appears to have been the only one of William Hallock's children to become a Quaker and it may have been his father's rancor that drove the couple to move on to Setauket after nine years of marriage.

It is difficult to learn who attended the Friends Meetings at Setauket. The marriages of John and Abigail's children and grandchildren, recorded at Westbury Monthly Meeting, indicate almost no Brookhaven names as marital partners. The Willets of Islip figure prominently, as do Powells from Bethpage or Islip. Other names such as Underhill, Burling, Hunt, Clapp and Quimby demonstrate connections to Oyster Bay, Hempstead and Rye, NY. The only clearly Brookhaven name among those listed in Westbury MM records is Satterley and that listing is accompanied by a note showing that Hannah Hallock, daughter of John, Jr. had acknowledged "marrying out" in 1735.⁷¹

Edward Rouse and Simon Rouse, 1661 Setauket land-holders, may have been related to John Rouse whose father, Thomas, was part-owner of Shelter Island and who became a Quaker martyr, losing an ear for defying the Puritans and appearing before King Charles II to plead for religious toleration.⁷² In 1678, in fact, a John Rouse of North Sea purchased a house in Brookhaven⁷³ and in 1689 filed a complaint of encroachment by John Mosher on his land at Old Man's.⁷⁴ Whether this is the same John Rouse is unclear.

Another family which may have worshiped with the Hallocks was that of Joseph Mapes, who was accepted as an inhabitant of Setauket on December 8, 1678 and purchased land from John Tooker, Sr. two days later.⁷⁵ He (if the same man) apparently returned to Southold a few years afterward a convinced Friend, as evidenced by the request by a Joseph Mapes (mis-typed in the abstract, "Maper") to New York Monthly Meeting in 1700 that a Meeting be established at Southold once a year.⁷⁶

And there's Israel Green, Brookhaven Town Commissioner in 1744,⁷⁷ who is almost certainly the same Israel Green who was accepted in membership at Nine Partners MM in Dutchess County, NY in 1762⁷⁸ Israel Green's daughters, Anna and Elizabeth, were married on the same day, March 26, 1752, at the Smithtown Presbyterian Church.⁷⁹ Elizabeth married a Zebulon Smith (possibly of the Richard "Bull" Smith family) and Anna married Peter Hallock, Jr., grandson of John, Sr. Peter acknowledged marrying out 2/1/1756⁸⁰ and was then welcomed into membership at Nine Partners MM. It seems highly likely that Israel Green (and his daughter, Anna) attended Meeting for Worship in the Hallock home while still living in Brookhaven.

Another family which could have worshiped with the Hallocks were the Darlings. Brothers John and Adam settled in Setauket around 1720, before moving on to Smithtown about ten years later. They were descendants of Scottish Quakers who had left the British Isles due to persecution around the turn of the 18th Century and their descendants fled to the Quaker stronghold of Nantucket, MA during the Revolutionary War.⁸¹ Jericho MM records show descendants Kezia and Sarah Darling marrying out at the turn of the 19th Century.⁸²

Meanwhile, the attitude of the community toward Friends had changed considerably since Arthur Smith's trial. In 1732, when Benjamin Hallock applied to register his earmark, a note next to his name says,

"minister's son,"⁸³ indicating a respect for John Hallock's religious vocation which had never been accorded the early Quaker preachers. That respect makes identifying Quakers more difficult, as complaints against them are no longer found in Town and court records.

The dearth of Quakers in Brookhaven by the mid-1700s is attested to in the *Journal* entry made by traveling Friend, John Woolman, in 1747: "...we were at a general meeting at Setauket, chiefly made up of other societies.... there was not much said by way of testimony, but it was, I believe, a good meeting."⁸⁴ And in 1756, when Friends of military age were enumerated, probably due to conscientious objection to the French and Indian War, Brookhaven was listed as having only one.⁸⁵ That one Friend was no doubt Edward Hallock, as a record exists at the Suffolk County Clerk's Office "from our monthly meeting held in the meeting house at Westbury...the 30th Day of the 4th month to the 3rd Day of the 5th month, 1755" stating, "This is to certify all whom it may concern that Edward Hallock of Brookhaven in Suffolk County Husbandman is allowed and deemed to be of the People called Quakers..."⁸⁶

And yet, as late as 1762, there must have been enough people attending the Hallocks' Worship Group in Setauket to occasion the granting of an Allowed Meeting under the care of Westbury MM.⁸⁷

When John Hallock, Jr. died in 1765 (having been pre-deceased by both Hannah who died in 1752, and his "last" wife, Phebe, as he called her in his will), his son Edward, had already taken his family to Ulster County, NY, where Edward's daughter, Dorcas, wife of John Young, was living. In 1768, aged over 80, Abigail Hallock, unmarried daughter of John, Sr. and Abigail Swazey died.⁸⁸ In 1769, David Hallock, son of John, Jr.'s brother William and Dinah Willets, took a removal certificate from Westbury MM to Purchase MM in Westchester where his brother Jesse had taken a removal certificate in 1745.⁸⁹ These appear to be the last of the Quaker Hallocks to have remained in Brookhaven in the 1760s. All others had apparently moved away or had been disowned for marrying out or for showing no interest in Friends' practice.

Yet, some Friends from other families must have remained in Setauket. Elias Hicks preached at a worship service in Setauket in August and again in December of 1784. Of the August meeting, Hicks says, "The meeting at Setauket, especially, was a solemn time; the Lord's presence was witnessed, to the tendering many hearts".⁹⁰ Who those "tendering hearts" were is currently an open question.

Hicks preached that same year at Blue Point, Patchogue, Fire Place, St. George's Manor in Mastic, Wading River, Stony Brook, Coram and at "Joshua Smith's near the branch."⁹¹ Clearly, there were scattered Friends throughout Brookhaven and it's near neighbors, or at least those who welcomed Friends' views, in 1784, but one can only speculate on their identities.

By 1813, Elias Hicks wrote about attending the funeral of Sarah (Ellison) Brewster, who had been accepted in membership at Jericho MM on June 17, 1813⁹²:

Second day [the 30th of 8th Month]. Had invitations to attend the funerals of two deceased women Friends on the day following. One of them had been lately, at her request, received into membership by our monthly meeting, but was never able to attend, she living in the town of Setauket, far distant from Friends."⁹³

NOTES

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