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## RAKESTRAW ON DELAWARE

BY GEORGE E. MCCracken

This study has been prepared for and with some collaboration by, a Rakestraw descendant, Mrs. Sidney J. Drumheller, who may not like to be told that the only writer on nomenclature consulted as to the meaning of the name, who has a derivation, is Bardsley (*The Romance of the London Directory* p.38), where we learn that it is "an old nickname for a dust-heap searcher"! No attempt has been made to find the English origin but there is a clue in the fact that on 9 Jan. 1633, one William Rakestraw made the inventory of the estate of Kathrin Gilpin of Kirkie Kendall, widow of Martin Gilpin, will dated 29 Aug. 1632, probated at the Archdeaconry of Richmond, 11 Jan. 1633 (*Penn. Mag. of Hist. and Biography* 50:100). Whether he had any connection with the American progenitor of the family is unknown.

In any case, the progenitor was a William Rakestraw, maltster, who was in Philadelphia by about 1684 and died there on 5 11th mo. 1718 (*Hinshaw, Encycl. of Am. Quaker Gen.* 2:410), which correctly suggests that he had been a Quaker, though the fact that his will was dated in non-Quaker fashion raises the question of whether he was still a member of meeting in good standing at his death.

He brought with him a first wife Grace, maiden name unknown to us, who was buried at Philadelphia, 11 11th mo. 1694. He must have been looking about for a second wife when his eye fell upon Hannah Day, wife of John, who was commonly thought dead upon a voyage. She must have been attractive since on 27 10th mo. 1695, dear Hannah was told by the meeting not to entertain Richard Sutton or William Rakestraw, and she was also receiving attentions from James Atkinson who declared his 1st intentions to marry "the widow" on 28 3rd mo. 1699, and again later, and the meeting was reluctant to approve this marriage as it felt that John Day's death was not proved, but ultimately Hannah and James did marry (see my *The Welcome Claimants* 466-470 for fuller detail).

In any case, on 24 2nd mo. 1696 William Rakestraw asked Philadelphia Monthly Meeting for a certificate to go in marriage to Long Island and for some reason did not get it until 28 6th mo. 1696 (*Pubs. Gen. Soc. Pa.* 4:204, 206f.). The second wife's first name was Elizabeth but her maiden name has not been discovered, and there is no record in Hinshaw's third volume, which contains the Long Island Quaker records, of any one named Rakestraw. Elizabeth died at Philadelphia, 8 8th mo.



1700, after which William married a third wife at Philadelphia Meeting on 4 5th mo. 1705, Elizabeth, widow of ~~Archer~~. The first wife Grace was involved in supervision of marriages in Philadelphia Monthly Meeting on 28 8th mo. 1692 and 25 9th mo. 1692, as was the second wife Elizabeth on 25 4th mo. 1697, 28 2nd mo. 1699 and 30 4th mo. 1699. This must certainly indicate that the Rakestraws were regarded as important members of the meeting. Yet on several occasions he had had "differences" with various friends, namely, Thomas Miller, Robert Ewer and William Pargeter (29 9th mo. 1689, 31 11th mo. 1689/90, and 27 4th mo. 1690), but these were submitted to friendly arbitration and the difference ended, though we hear no details.

On William Parsons' "Plan of Philadelphia," made in the 18th century but showing ownership of lots at an early period, William Rakestraw is shown as owner of an 80-foot lot on the north side of Chestnut Street between Second and Third Streets (*Pa. Mag.* 80:198) and of a 66-foot lot on the south side of High [now Market] Street between Fifth and Sixth (p. 201). He was often before the Board of Property about his real estate and appears in its Minutes many times (2 *Pa. Archives* 19: 23, 27 f., 37, 61, 136 f., 392, 488). He had sold a right to Charles Pickering who complained on 15 12th mo. 1689/90 that John Wheeler's house was on the front of Delaware on the lot that properly belonged to that purchase. He requested the bank before the lot an apparently got it. On 22 12th mo. 1689/90 Rakestraw complained that he had "Extremely suffered" for want of the front lot and the Commissioners offered him 60 feet of bank lot just north of James West, but he desired time to consider it until next session. On 8 1st mo. 1689/90 he wanted 100 feet of bank "to make ropes on the Proprietary's land," which was evidently next, and the Commission allowed him the 60 feet he had requested the month before, plus 40 feet of the Proprietary's land, probably on a sort of rental basis. On 3 3rd mo. 1690 he requested land near to his house and was granted a square behind his lot bounded by Schuylkill 8th and Broad, Sassafras and Vine, at ten shillings per square. This lot was, of course, not one of those shown on Parsons' map. On 14 12th mo. 1690/1, he was granted a half square bounded north by Mulberry, east by Broad, south by back lots, and west by 8th Street, to be added to what was granted 3 3rd mo. 1690. At the session of 7 July 1693 a deed of Daniel Ccoke alludes to a right of Rakestraw, and then we hear nothing of him in these Minutes until 9 6th mo. 1703 when there is another allusion to the Pickering lot.

Meanwhile, however, William Rakestraw addressed a



letter to William Penn, then in America, on 11 3rd mo. 1701 (text in *Pa. Mag.* 40:498). In it he takes the Governor to task for ill treatment Rakestraw had received from the Governor's agents at various times with regard to the right to Philadelphia land due him by reason of his larger purchase in 1684. The letter is largely in the third person and he calls himself "a poor man" about whom he is writing but occasionally he reverts to the first person and it is clear he is describing himself. The whole tone of the letter is offensive and we do not hear what the Governor did about the matter, but there is a report (*ibid.* 17:28) that in 1707 Rakestraw was charged with writing "several scurrilous libels and rhymes against the proprietor," which fact gains him some mention in an article on Pennsylvania poets.

On 5 4th mo. 1695, together with Thomas Andrew and Owen Foulk, he was presented to the County Court of Quarter Sessions and Common Pleas for "Incroaching upon the street of Philadelphia." At the Philadelphia Monthly Meeting of 29 3rd mo. 1713 William Rakestraw confessed that he had broke the discipline in exposing Thomas Story thereto and likewise in relation to his son's marriage, and on 25 7th mo. 1713, he was suspended. Thus, he appears not to have been in good standing as a Friend when he made his will.

His will, signed on 9 Dec. 1718, probated 2 Feb. 1718/19 (Philadelphia Wills D:113, #144), calls him William Rakestraw of the City of Philadelphia, malster [sic], and directs his body to be buried in a pine coffin near his family. To wife Elizabeth £100 or £12 a year; has already given her a large Bible, dwelling house at Center or bank house. To son John one shilling; to daughter Grace Zane £50 and to each of her children, £5; to grandson Joseph Rakestraw, £10; to daughter Elizabeth £40 and to each of her children born or living at my decease £5 each, payable as their mother's legacy. To daughters Sarah, Ann and Mary, £30 each. "If any child die, his portion is to be divided, except that John shall not share." If any child marry ill or rude person, such is to be cut off by the trustees. To son-in-law Nathaniel Zane all wearing apparel except cloke to son William and light colored coat and vest to son-in-law Whital; residue of personal estate to sons William and Thomas Rakestraw; witnesses: Tobias Nilee, William Hatcher (both by mark), John Cadwalader.

Children: order uncertain, division between wives also uncertain but the first three were by Grace

1. Grace, d. 6 10th mo. 1741; m. Philadelphia, 27 6th mo. 1697, Nathaniel Zane, d. 29 12th mo. 1727/8 aged 55, son of Robert and Elizabeth (Willis) Zane, of Newton



Township, Gloucester Co., N.J.; she m. (2) David Price of Merion. Nathaniel Zane's will dated 20 12th mo. (Feb.) 1727/8, probated 18 March 1727/8 (N.J. Wills 1:530), mentions but does not name wife, names children as Joseph, Jonathan, Ebenezer, Isaac (under age), William, Margaret, Abigail, Hannah.

- ii. John, cut off with one shilling in his father's will and not to share in the division of the share of any child who died; had m. by 1708, probably much earlier, Ruth -----; no probate found. It is possible but improbable that he was the father of the grandson Joseph. The following children are recorded at Philadelphia Monthly Meeting as those of John and Ruth:
  - 1. Mary, d. Philadelphia, 4 2nd mo. 1708.
  - 2. William, d. Philadelphia, 27 3rd mo. 1711.
  - 3. John, d. Philadelphia, 15 4th mo. 1712.
- 2 iii. Joseph, bur. 1 8th mo. 1700.
- iv. Elizabeth, by 1718 had m. ----- and had children, but further information is not available.
- v. Sarah, m. 1717 James Whitall of Gloucester Co., N.J., whose will dated 3 Dec. 1728 calls him of Cooper's Creek, Newton Township, Gloucester Co., yeoman, probated 24 March 1728/9 (N.J. Wills 1:502 f.); wife Sarah heiress and with brother-in-law Robert Zane executor of real and personal estate. Children mentioned but not named. Inventory £94/18.
- vi. Ann, under 19/1718, probably the aunt mentioned in the will of her nephew William #6.
- vii. Mary, under 19 in 1718.
- 3 viii. William, d. 8 7th mo. 1736.
- 4 ix. Thomas, bur. 17 3rd 1728 among non-Quaker burials.
- x. Susanna, bur. 22 10th mo. 1708.
- xi. Child, d. 4 9th mo. 1707.

2. Joseph<sup>2</sup> Rakestraw, son of William<sup>1</sup> Rakestraw and his first wife Grace -----, is little known. In "A Record of the Register of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting," p. 284, there is a "Record of Deceased Friends for the Year 1700" in which we find Joseph Rakestraw, son of William Rakestraw, 8th mo. 1, 1700, and this notation added later: "In digging a grave in Friends Burial Ground in Philada. in the Spring of 1815, a tomb stone was found with the following inscription. Here lies a plant | Too many seen it | Flourished and perisht | In half a minute. Joseph Rakestraw the son of William Shot by a negro September 30th 1700." In pencil is this: "Joseph Rakestraw, printer, had this stone many years and built it up in his grate, it being soapstone. So his sister Sarah told S.L.S." The printer was probably #19, below. We know nothing of the wife of this Joseph but think he was probably the father of the grandson Joseph mentioned in his father's will and place him here because of the posi-



tion of the grandson in the will.

Child: all known

5 1. Joseph, d. between 23 July and 23 Aug. 1750.

3. William<sup>2</sup> Rakestraw, son of William<sup>1</sup> Rakestraw and undoubtedly, despite his late position in his father's will, by the first wife Grace, was buried at Philadelphia 8 7th mo. 1736. He certainly married thrice, first to Rebecca, perhaps born Clift, widow of the woolcomber Christopher Lobb, and she was buried as a non-Quaker at Philadelphia, 21 1st mo. 1709. On her previous history see my *Welcome Claimants* pp. 129 f. The Lobbs had at least a daughter Rachel, died 2 1st mo. 1706/7. He married, second, in 1712, Ann -----, whose identity has not been established, but the marriage was out of unity, and William<sup>1</sup> Rakestraw alluded to his fault in his confession mentioned above. Also, Ebenezer Large was disciplined for having been present on the occasion of this marriage of William Rakestraw Jr., the discipline being dated 29 6th mo. 1712 (*Pubs. Gen. Soc. Pa.* 7: 73). He married, third, also out of meeting, 28 2nd mo. 1732, Anne Smith who died 10 11th mo. 1741. The Leach Papers at the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania identify this Ann as a daughter of Giles Knight but it was Thomas Rakestraw who married Mary Knight. William Rakestraw of the Northern Liberties, yeoman, signed by mark his will dated 28 Aug. 1736, probated 5 Oct. 1736 by the witnesses: Charles West, Richard Allen, Thomas Leech (Philadelphia Wills F:13). To loving wife Anne, a life interest in the brick house or tenement (the token being a pewter platter) in which Sarah Griscom dwells, as a life interest, then to son William. To William one of the houses on the Delaware bank joining to Charles West in the Northern Liberties, and a vacant water lott where the shead is built, at age 21, but if he dies without issue, then this to daughter Grace, who gets the other bank house. If she continues unmarried, wife Anne gets the stone house, then to son William. Daughter Rachel gets £50, her two children Rebeckah and Hannah, surnames not stated; residue to wife Anne. William and Grace shall pay what is due yearly to the Loan Office. Executors: loving wife Anne and son William.

Children:

probably by 1st wife Rebecca

1. Rachel, mentioned in father's will; m., as 3rd wife, 20 2nd mo. 1727 at Philadelphia Meeting House, Jacob Coffin, bur. 26 6th mo. 1736, two days before his father-in-law made his will.



## Children: surname Coffin

1. Rebecca, mentioned in grandfather's will.
2. Hannah, mentioned in grandfather's will; m. 17 10th mo 1758, Isaac Cathrell, b. 28 8th mo. 1733, son of Edward and Rachel (Herring) Cathrell of Philadelphia.  
by 2nd wife Anne
- ii. Grace, bur. 28 8th mo. 1713.
- iii. Grace, d. 14 6th mo. 1750, m. 27 3rd mo. 1737, Tobias Griscom, her mother consenting 25 1st mo. 1736/7. His death date was not found. The *American Weekly Mercury* of 10 3rd mo. 1743 (Kenneth Scott's abstracts, p. 122) carried a notice in the matter of her father's estate to the effect that haircloths continue to be made and sold as formerly by Grace Griscom in the house of the deceased at the upper end of Front Street.

## Children: surname Griscom

1. William, d. 13 11th mo. 1738.
2. Samuel, d. 7 12th mo. 1741.
3. Rebecca, d. 29 10th mo. 1745.
4. Ann, d. 1 7th mo. 1746.
5. Ann, d. 23 8th mo. 1749.
6. Rebecca, b. 29 10th mo. 1745, living 1772 when legatee of her uncle William (#6).
- 6 iv. William, b. 1718, under 21 on 28 Aug. 1736, d. 1 3rd mo. 1772 aged 54.

4. Thomas<sup>2</sup> Rakestraw, son of William<sup>1</sup> Rakestraw and most probably by the first wife Grace, died 17 3rd mo. 1728, listed among non-Quaker burials. There is no probate for him. He married first Sarah, maiden name unknown, who was buried, probably with issue, 4 4th mo. 1714. He was granted a certificate to Abington Monthly Meeting to marry, 30 7th mo. 1715, and he married there, Mary Knight, daughter of Giles and Mary Knight. Thomas is mentioned in Giles Knight's will dated 10 8th mo. 1726, probated 7 Nov. 1726 (Wills E:6), but Mary is not but there is no record of her death. He married third, in 1720, Mary Wilkins [not Wilkinson, as Leach has it], died 4 10th mo. 1728, daughter of Thomas Wilkins of Evesham whose will dated 4 12th mo. 1729 (N.J. Wills 2:528) mentions grandson Thomas Rakestraw. This is the Mary Rakestraw received on certificate from Newton, N.J. dated 11 5th mo. 1720, at Philadelphia Monthly Meeting.

## Children:

probably by first wife Sarah

- i. Martha, d. 24 7th mo. 1716. Leach says she was daughter of Thomas deceased but no Thomas had yet died, and it may be that she was daughter of Sarah deceased, as she was.
- ii. Mary, m., record not identifying her parents, as 2nd wife, in succession to a 1st wife Mary who died 7 6th mo. 1730,



14 8th mo. 1731, George Wilson of Philadelphia who d.  
13 11th mo. 1748.

Children: surname Wilson

1. Mary, b. 31 6th mo. 1732, d. 12 6th mo. 1748.
2. Ann, b. 8 3rd mo. 1734, m. 12 4th mo. 1753, John Parrish, son of John.

Children: surname Parrish

- a. George, b. 17 3rd mo. 1754.
- b. Elizabeth, b. 8 8th mo. 1756.
- c. William, b. 28 12th mo. 1758.
3. William, b. 13 7th mo. 1739, d. 31 5th mo. 1816 aged 77, m. 27 1st mo. 1763, Abigail Mott, bur. 14 10th mo. 1793 aged 53, daughter of Asher Mott who d. either 1 11th mo. 1750 or 5 3rd mo. 1751, by Deborah who d. 5 8th mo. 1750.

Children: surname Wilson

- a. Deborah, b. 13 1st mo. 1766, d. 19 2nd mo. 1769.
- b. Sarah, b. 8 9th mo. 1767, d. 21 11th mo. 1767.
- c. Anna, b. 16 10th mo. 1768, m. 1 1st mo. 1795, Reay King, son of Joseph and Ann of New York City.
- d. William, b. 16 5th mo. 1770, d. 3 7th mo. 1773.
4. Joseph, b. 13 8th mo. 1741.
5. Hannah, b. 21 7th mo. 1743, m. 4 4th mo. 1765 Samuel Hopkins Jr., son of Samuel.

Children: surname Hopkins

- a. Sarah b. 22 2 mo. 1766.
- b. Mary, b. 8 9th mo. 1768.
6. George, d. 26 5th mo. 1744.
7. George, b. 10 11th mo. 1745, bur. 4 11th mo. 1789 aged 43.
8. Elizabeth, b. 5 7th mo. 1749, bur. 2 6th mo. 1784 aged 35, m. 13 3rd mo. 1770 John Field, son of John.

Children: surname Field

- a. John, b. 1 4th mo. 1771, d. 8 1st mo. 1826.
- b. Mary, b. 14 11th mo. 1773.
- c. George, b. 1 7th mo. 1774.
- d. William, b. 31 8th mo. 1776, d. 27 2nd mo. 1798.
- e. Samuel, b. 4 1st mo. 1782.
- f. Elizabeth, b. 14 5th mo. 1783.

iii. Susanna, d. 20 10th mo. 1723, her mother uncertain.

iv. Joseph, d. 29 9th mo. 1726. Leach also says son of Thomas deceased, though Thomas was living, and we think this means his mother was deceased, in which case it is possible that Mary Knight was his mother.

*probably by 3rd wife Mary Wilkins*

v. Son, d. 4 10th mo. 1728. If he did not live long enough to be named, he must have been son of Mary Wilkins.

7 vi. Thomas, b. 1720-1728, certainly son of Mary Wilkins, as he was mentioned in his grandfather Wilkins' will.

5. Joseph<sup>3</sup> Rakestraw, house carpenter, was certainly