



The Chapman Family from William P. Davis' "History of Bucks County", 1905

Bucks County, Pennsylvania

[The copy being transcribed from was very weak and light thus some error may exist. Some paragraphing added by CFA.]

THE CHAPMAN FAMILY. The pioneer ancestor of the Chapman family was John Chapman, who was born at Stanhope, or Stanhaugh, in the county of Durham, England, about the year 1635. He was a son of John Chapman of Froslerly, Durham, and the Parish records show that the family had been residents in that locality for several generations and that some of their descendants continue to reside there. John Chapman was an early convert to the principles of George Fox, and as early as 1656 suffered imprisonment and other persecutions for his religious principles. In 1660 he was confined in York Castle for eight weeks for refusing to take a prescribed oath, together with other Friends, and at several periods thereafter had goods seized for the payment of fines imposed for attending non-conformist meetings. He was twice married, first on 10 mo 14, 1665, by which marriage he had one daughter, Ann, born 4 mo. 21, 1667, but who died 9 mo. 13, 1668. His wife died 8 mo. 2, 1668, and he was married a second time 4 mo. 12, 1670 to Jane Sadler of Lagenby. To this marriage was born seven children, five at Stanhope and two in Bucks County. On June 21, 1684, John Chapman and Jane his wife and their five children set out from Stanhaugh, in Durham, taking with them a certificate from the Friends Meeting at that place to Friends in America, and took passage on the ship "Shield" at New Castle, on the river Tyne, for Penn's colony in America. On the 12th of September they encountered a storm off the capes of Virginia, which almost entirely dismantled their ship, and they were for two days at the mercy of the waves, but on the 15th of September effected a landing on the shores of Maryland. After a few weeks stay in Maryland they proceeded up the Delaware to Bucks County, arriving at the house of Phineas Pemberton near the Falls in the latter part of October. Previous to leaving England, John Chapman had purchased 500 acres of land to be laid out in Pennsylvania, and it was laid out to him in the present township of Wrightstown, then the frontier of the little Quaker settlement on the Delaware, and still an absolute wilderness. Here the family removed in 10 mo., 1684 and erected the first house that far north in the county of Bucks. John Chapman died in 5 mo. (July, 1694, and Jane, his wife, in 9 mo., 1699, and both were buried in an old burying ground near Penns Park. Friends Meeting was held at the house of John Chapman for some time prior to the erection of the first Meeting House on his land. The children of John and Jane (Sadler) Chapman were:

1. Mara, born at Stanhope, 2 mo. 12 1671, married 2 mo. 28 1697, John Croasdale, who died 10 mo. 14 1706, leaving three children: Ruth, Agnes, and Thomas. She married (second) John Wildman and had two daughters: Mercy and Elizabeth, and has left numerous descendants.
2. Jan Chapman, born 10 mo. 19, 1672.
3. Ann Chapman, born 3 mo. 19 1676, married John Parsons, of Wrightstown, in 1717, and died 10 mo. 9, 1732, without children. He was an eminent preacher among Friends and travelled extensively in this country and abroad.
4. John Chapman, born 11 mo. 11, 1678 was surveyor for Bucks county for many years, making nearly all the early surveys, and was also a justice. He married, November 10, 1739, Ruth daughter of John and Mary Wildinson, and had one son John who was for many years a justice and a member of the assembly.
5. Ruth Chapman, born 5 mo. 9, 1682.
6. and 7. Abraham and Joseph Chapman, twins, were the only children born to John and Jane Chapman in Bucks county. They were born at Wrightstown, 12 mo. 12, 1685. Joseph married Mary Worth, of Stoney Brook, New Jersey, who died 5 mo. 24, 1727. Of her six children only three lived to maturity, and her only surviving son Isaac, died in 1770 without issue. Joseph married again in 1730, Mary Wilkinson, daughter of John who died in 1744 leaving no surviving issue. Abraham Chapman, son of John and Jane, born 12 mo. 1685, died 2 mo. 23, 1755. He was a member of Colonial Assembly from 1723 to 1732, and a justice from 1738 until 1752. His son Benjamin, was a member of Assembly in 1758-59, and was succeeded by his brother Abraham, who served for five years, when Benjamin was again returned and served until the breaking out of the Revolution. Abraham Chapman, Sr. was married in 1715 to Susan Olden, daughter of William Olden of Bound Brook, New Jersey, and they were the parents of eight children, viz. John, born August 1716, Abraham born Jun, 1718, John born February 1720, Jane born May 21, 1723, Thomas born June 8, 1725, Benjamin born November 10, 1727, Elizabeth born May 20, 1730, and Joseph born October 20, 1733.

Joseph Chapman, youngest child of Abraham and Susan (Olden) Chapman, was born in Wrightstown in 1733, and died of yellow fever in 1790. He married, 5 mo. 17, 1758. Ann, daughter of John Fell, who was born 10 mo. 6, 1739, and died 3 mo. 20, 1828. they were the parents of fourteen children, nine of whom lived to mature age.

Abraham Chapman, sixth child of Joseph and Ann (Fell) Chapman, was born 8 mo. 18, 1767, at Wrightstown, and died at Doylestown, 2 mo. 24, 1856. He was an eminent lawyer, being admitted to the Bucks county bar in 1779. He practiced at Newtown until the removal of the county seat to Doylestown in 1812, when he moved to Doylestown and spent the balance of his days in that town. He was known for years as the "Father of the Bucks County Bar." He was the president of the Doylestown National Bank. He married 12 mo. 15, 1795, Elizabeth Meredith, daughter of Dr. Hugh and Mary (Todd) Meredith, the former a native of Warwick township, of Welsh descent, and was for many years a practicing attorney at Doylestown, and the latter was a daughter of Joseph Todd, of Warminster, and of English descent. Abraham and Elizabeth (Meredith) Chapman were the parents of eight children, only two of whom lived to grow up: Wilhelmina born 1 mo. 27, 1801 married Mathias Morris, and Henry, born 4 mo. 2, 1804, died 4 mo. 11, 1891.

Hon. Henry Chapman was born at Wrightstown, but was reared in Doylestown, where he spent his entire life. He studied law in the office of his father and was admitted to the bar at the age of twenty-one, April 25, 1825. Inheriting the fine intellectual ability of his illustrious sire, he had made the most excellent opportunities for acquiring a fine classical education, and possessed of a truly well-balanced mind and a faculty of concentration, his classical acquirements and fine literary taste lent a gloss to his oratory, and made him a strong advocate. In politics he was a Democrat of the old school, and exercised a potent influence in his wing of the party. He was elected to the state senate in 1843 and served one term of three years. In 1847 he was appointed to fill an unexpired term of four years as president judge of the Chester-Delaware District, and at its termination in 1851 declined a renomination. He was the nominee of his party in Bucks for the position of president judge of the Bucks Montgomery District and though he carried his home county by a handsome majority, internal dissent within the party in Montgomery lost him the election. In 1856 he was elected to congress from his home district, and at the termination of his term declined a renomination. In 1861 he was elected president judge of the Bucks-Montgomery District, and at the termination of the term in 1871 retired to private life. He died April 11, 1891. He was twice married, his first wife being Rebecca Stewart, daughter of Dr. Thomas and Rebecca Stewart, of New Britain township. She died 10 mo., 1883, and he married in 1845, Nancy Findlay Shunk, daughter of Governor Francis R. and Jane (Findlay) Shunk. By his first marriage he had four children: Elizabeth, who married T. Bigelow Lawrence, of Boston, Massachusetts, and has been many years a widow, residing at Doylestown: Mary Rebecca, who married William R. Mercer, born at Washington D.C. now at Doylestown. Mrs. Mercer died October 27 1903. They were the parents of three children: Henry C., Elizabeth, wife of Captain Fidler Von Isarborn, of Austria, and William R., who married 1904, Martha Dana, of Boston, Massachusetts. The other children of Henry and Rebecca Chapman were Henry A., who died in 1834, and Thomas, who died 10 mo. 18, 1862. the children of Henry and Nancy Findlay (Shunk) Chapman are: Fanny, residing at the old homestead near Doylestown, and Arthur. Nancy (Chunk) Chapman died 2 mo. 27, 1900.

Arthur Chapman was born at Doylestown. He studied law and was admitted to the bar, November 2, 1871, and practiced for a few years, but preferring an outdoor life to the practice of the legal profession, he purchased the two hundred acre farm in New Britain, that was the property of his ancestors of his father's first wife for two centuries, and conducted it for several years. He has lived a retired life in Doylestown township for the last fifteen years.