

ART. X.—*Captain Thomas Holme, William Penn's Surveyor-General (1624-1695)*. By H. S. COWPER, F.S.A.

Read at Penrith, June 29th, 1922.

LAST year I received a letter from Mr. Albert Cook Myers of Philadelphia, asking if I could help in any way with the early life-history and forebears of Thomas Holme, Surveyor-General to William Penn, and a native of Hawkshead Parish. Before receiving that letter, I had never heard of Thomas Holme: a fact I reluctantly but immediately confessed. Nevertheless Thomas Holme was a history-maker, and since, as far as I know, his name is unrecorded in local literature, I think we cannot do less than to rectify the omission by a note in our *Transactions*.

Thomas Holme was the son of George Holme of Waterhead, Coniston, which is in Hawkshead Parish, and this fact and the names of his children are recorded, Mr. Myers informs me, in the Irish Quaker records. His mother's name, we find in the Coniston Parish Register, was Alice Whitesyde (see pedigree in appendix) while George of Waterhead, who made his will in 1602 was, there is no reason to doubt, his grandfather.*

His earlier history, prior to his connection with Pennsylvania is not very clear. By his own account he had been in the army, presumably on the Parliament side, and, as we shall see, he was styled, even in Pennsylvania,

* There was at one time an inn immediately at the head of Coniston-water, and it has been suggested that this was a still more ancient farm house, and was the homestead of these Holmes. I do not think so. The inn mentioned was the "new inn" of the time of Green the artist (1814); and his etching shews the old houses just below the entrance to Mrs. Marshall's house, Monk Coniston Park. The fact is that there was quite a group of homesteads all called Waterhead.

Captain Thomas Holme. But the first record of him is, I think, as a Quaker in Ireland. In 1655, he was living in Limerick; and in 1657 he was turned out of a Friend's house in Cashel by Colonel Richard le Hunt. In the same year we have a report by one H. Ingoldesby that Capt. Holmes (a discontented Quaker) was holding meetings at his house in Limerick.* In 1659 in an address to Parliament, he relates that he (Thomas Holme) late a Captain in the army and several others were at a meeting in Wexford, which was broken up. He was the subject of persecution in Ireland, and of imprisonment in 1660-1. In 1673 an address was presented to the Lord Lieutenant and Council that Friends were frequently defrauded in consequence of their refusal to take an oath, and as an instance, it was cited that at Wexford, Thomas Holme was owed £200 by a Captain Thornhill, for which sum judgement had been obtained, but being subpoena'd into Chancery, as he could not answer on oath, he lost his debt. In 1676 his goods were seized.

He was of Waterford in 1682, the year, as we shall see, that he went to Pennsylvania, and that is apparently the cause of the confusion as to his place of birth. Even in Appleton's *Cyclopædia of American Biography* (1888) he is stated to have been born at Waterford, this being, I think, a misreading of his own MS. record that his birthplace was Waterhead.

We now come to the great turning-point in his life. He had apparently capital, for he became one of the first purchasers of land in the province granted to William Penn by Charles II. and now called Pennsylvania. He acquired 5000 acres and on April 18th, 1682, was appointed to be Surveyor-General by Penn, being styled in Penn's Commission "my loving friend Captain Thomas Holme,"

* Lansdowne MS. 822, fol. 127, published by Professor Firth in *Journal of Friends' Historical Society* vii, no. 2, 56-58.

and only five days later, April 23rd, he sailed for Pennsylvania with his family in the "Amity."

Holme's activities in the new world are a matter of history, and were of great importance. As Surveyor-General he laid out the city of Philadelphia much as it is to-day. It should be remarked that the plan is one of great regularity and formality, with perfectly straight and parallel streets: and one cannot but wonder where a man born on the banks of Coniston, and perhaps schooled in the little irregular town of Hawkshead, got his training for such an achievement.

In 1682, and immediately on his arrival, he was made a member of the 1st assembly of the Province, and the following year he was elected representative of the Provincial Council. He sat with the Lord Proprietor at the first court, held November 3rd, 1682; on the first legislative assembly, 7th December, at Chester; and in the first council held at Philadelphia, 10th March, 1683. He served on many committees, and in 1684 was one of three to draw up a charter for the incorporation of Philadelphia as a borough. In 1685 he was frequently acting as governor of the Province, and he took a leading part in treating with the Indians.*

He was partly responsible for the following publications:—

1683: a description of the city with map "by T. H." is in "A letter from William Penn, Proprietary and Governor of Pennsylvania."

1683: "Map of the Improved part of the Province of Pennsylvania in America. Begun by Wil: Penn, Proprietary and Governor thereof Anno 1683"; with a subheading that the map is by Thomas Holme, Surveyor-general.

Another large map was published 1687-8.

* Mr. Myers informs me that in the Land Office in the Capitol building at Harrisburg, there are hundreds of documents signed by Thomas Holme, and many of them wholly in his own handwriting.

In doing this work the Surveyor-General had deputies in each county, but the entire work of laying out the land and locating towns and highways was under his supervision. This post he retained to the end of his life.

When he had laid out the city, he removed to a house at the N.W. corner of Front, and lived there until 1688 : in which year he went to his own plantation, Well Spring, Dublin Township, Philadelphia County, where he remained until his death in April 1695.

Holme is stated (as we have already noted) to have had a commission as Captain in the Parliament forces. In Mr. Howard M. Jenkins' *Pennsylvania, Colonial and Federal*, we read :—

Thomas Holme, who succeeded Captain William Crispin as Surveyor-general of the Province and in a few years published a map of all the lots, bore the title of Captain as no mere compliment or local rank, for he was such in the army of Oliver Cromwell.*

I have tried, but so far quite unsuccessfully, to obtain more exact information about the military part of his career. Professor C. H. Firth of Oxford, to whom I was referred, wrote me that he had not met his name among any of the lists of Parliamentary officers that he knew of. I searched the Calendar of State Papers (Domestic Series) without any result and further information on this point is very desirable. In Pennsylvania he was styled "gentleman" and used for arms "Argent a chevron azure between three chaplets gules," the arms of Holme of Huntington, Co. Yorks., which he differenced by surrounding the coat with a bordure of roundels. Presumably he was not entitled to these arms.

* Communicated to me by Miss M. Ethel Crawshaw, Librarian of the Soc. of Friends' Reference Library at Devonshire House. After giving other information, the quoted paragraph proceeds, "One of his (Holme's) daughters married in 1683 Captain Crispin's son, Silas, who in some way, probably maternally, was a cousin of William Penn."

Nearly all the above information is derived from Appleton's *Cyclopædia of American Biography*,* Mr. A. C. Myers' *Immigration of Irish Quakers into Pennsylvania 1682-1752* (1902), and private letters from Mr. Myers himself. Also a sketch by the same author in *Scribner's* (New York, 1912) and information above noted supplied by Miss M. E. Crawshaw. Thomas Holme seems to have been "a big man," and well worthy of some record as a man of Hawkshead Parish parentage.

APPENDIX.

Abstract of will of George Holme of Waterhead.

December 2, 1602 ; George Holme of the Waterhead in Conistone. To be buried at Hauxhead. To my son George his heires for ever tenement and fermeholde at Yewdale of annual rent of xxi^s and tenement and fermholde of Waterhead of annual rent of xxi^s. Said son when he attain 21 yeares to pay to each of his three daus. viz, Agnes, Elizabeth and Mabell, all under 21 yeares. etc. To Ann my wife.

Extracts from Parish Registers, Hawkshead and Coniston.

Marriages

1586, Aug. xxjth : George Holme & Ann Sawrey (H)
1613, May 18 : George Holme & Alice Whitesyde (C)

Baptisms

1592, Aprill xvjth : George Holme fil : George (H)
1593, March xxiiijth : Elsabeth Holme fil : George (H)
1624, November 3 : Thomas s. of George Holme (C)

Burials

1603, May xth : Georg Holme de Waterhead (H)
1630, December xvijth : Georg Holme de Waterhead in templo (H)

There are many Holmes in the registers, but I think the following pedigree of T. Holme's immediate ancestors is probably correct. His own issue is given in Mr. Myers' book on the Immigration of Irish Quakers, already quoted.

* Ed. by J. J. Wilson and J. Fiske, N.Y. 1888.

CAPTAIN THOMAS HOLME.

GEORGE HOLME of Waterhead = ANN SAWREY
 will dated 2 Dec. 1602. Burd. | marrd. 1586, Aug. 21,
 May 10, 1603, at Hawkshead. | at Hawkshead.

GEORGE HOLME of Waterhead = ALICE WHITESYDE, (under age 1602) bapt. Ap. 16 1592, at Hawkshead; burd. Dec. 17, 1630, in Hawkshead Church.	May 18, 1613, at Coniston.	
		Agnes, Elizabeth, bapt. March 24, 1593 at Hawkshead. Mabel.

Capt. THOMAS HOLME = Wife's name unknown
 Penn's Surveyor-General;
 bapt. Nov. 3, 1624, at
 Coniston; died April,
 1695.

Sarah = Richard Holcombe	Michael d.s.p.	Tryall d.s.p.	Eleanor = (1) Jos. Moss (2) Jos. Smallwood	Esther = Silas Crispin (1683) s. of Capt. William Crispin; issue, 6 children.
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