BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF JOSEPH FOX, ESQ., OF PHILADELPHIA.

BY ANNE H. CRESSON.

Six years after Charles the Second had, under the Great Seal of England, given by his Letters Patent to William Penn the "Province of Pennsylvania with divers great powers and Jurisdiction for the well Government thereof," and four years after the "Welcome" had brought Penn on his first visit to his infant colony, the ship "Desire" from Plymouth, England, cast anchor in the river Delaware bringing to the rapidly growing town of Philadelphia a company of emigrants known as the Plymouth Friends. Among them were Francis Rawle and his son of the same name, with six servants, Nicholas Pearce with two servants, James Fox with his family and eight servants, and John Shellson with his wife and four servants.

Of those here classed as servants to the other passengers were John, Richard, and Justinian Fox. According to the custom of the day, these had no doubt bound themselves to serve for a period of time of sufficient length to pay for the passage money advanced for them, by those in better circumstances than themselves. Many emigrants not rich in this world's goods brought relatives with them in this way.

On March 13, 1685/6, before leaving England, Fox and Rawle had, for themselves and their associates, purchased five thousand acres of land of William Penn.

It was the purpose of these emigrants to make their settlement an industrial one. James Claypoole and Robert Turner, Penn's commissioners, wrote to Thomas Holme, the surveyor general:

At the request of James Fox, Francis Rawle, Nicholas Pearce and Richard Grove, in behalf of themselves and other Friends of Plymouth, joint purchasers with them of five thousand acres of land, that we would
grant the said five thousand acres together, for a township, in the most convenient place for water for the encouragement of the woolen manufacture, intended to be set up by them; these we therefore, in the Proprietary's name, do will and require thee forthwith to survey ... and make return thereof to the Secretary's office at Philadelphia, the 5th of 5mo., 1686.

At a meeting of the commissioners, 4 month 7, 1690, "James Fox and Fran. Rawle Requests they may have a Patent for the 5,000 acres they Purchased now called the Plymouth Town, and that the Six Hundred Acres which was formerly Intended for a Town be Returned as part of the 5,000 acres. Ordered that a Warr't be made for the Returning the 5,000 acres of land in Manner aforesaid.

"Ordered that Fran: Cook have the other half of the vacant lott next to the Plymouth Friends Lott in the High Street." 1

The five thousand acres were laid out in what is now known as Plymouth Township, Montgomery County, but at that time was part of Philadelphia County. With their associates, Fox and Rawle took up their residence upon the land. A Friends' Meeting was at once established at the house of James Fox, which has continued to the present day and is known as Plymouth Meeting. The country was too young for such an industry as this company had planned and the scheme was abandoned. Neither Fox nor Rawle remained long in the new settlement. It is said that their wives found it too lonely.

The parents of James Fox were Francis Fox and his wife Dorothy Kekewich, members of the Society of Friends, living at St. Germans, Cornwall. James Fox married Elizabeth Record and settled at Plymouth, Devonshire, England, where he engaged in the manufacture of cloth. He appears to have been the leader, (with Rawle as his associate), of the emigrant company of Plymouth Friends. Of the two, Fox is usually first mentioned on the records.

1 Pennsylvania Archives, second series, vol. xix, p. 35.
After abandoning their settlement in Plymouth, Pennsylvania, James Fox removed with his family to Philadelphia, where he became interested in public affairs. He was a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1688 and again from 1693 to 1699. He died in Philadelphia, September 19, 1699.

Justinian Fox came to Philadelphia with the Plymouth Friends in 1686, and married there Elizabeth, only daughter of Joseph and Mary Yard.

The relationship between Justinian and James Fox, previously mentioned, has never been ascertained. That there was some such tie is presumed from the fact that they came in the same vessel; that Justinian Fox was present at the marriage of James's son George in 1686, and witnessed the will of the latter in 1699, as well as deeds previously made by members of the family.

Nothing on record confirms the tradition that Justinian Fox was educated as a physician. At this late day but few items can be gathered regarding him. In June, 1707, with Anthony Taylor and Isaiah Appleton he witnessed the will of Samuel Shepperd. The following January, the will of Robert Turnham was witnessed by Joseph and William Yard and Justinian Fox, while in March of the same year Anthony Taylor made his will and signed it in the presence of Joseph Yard and Justinian Fox. The witnesses signing the will of Jeremiah Gray, in 1715, were Justinian Fox, George Emlen, and Charles Brockden.

It is said that Justinian Fox was a Friend and his wife joined the Society after their marriage. He died leaving but a small property, and letters of administration on his estate were granted to his widow Elizabeth, on January 16, 1718/19.

The seven children of Justinian and Elizabeth (Yard) Fox were, Mary Fox, married Benjamin Rhoads, and had one son; Elizabeth Fox, died young; Elizabeth Fox (2d), married Joseph Rakestraw and left issue; Sarah Fox, married William Martin, and left issue; Joseph Fox, the
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Joseph Fox, son of Justinian and Elizabeth (Yard) Fox, born in Philadelphia, died December 10, 1779, aged seventy years; married at Philadelphia Meeting, September 25, 1746, Elizabeth Mickle, born 1729; died January 1, 1805; daughter of Samuel and Thomazine (Marshall) Mickle.

Samuel Mickle, a merchant of good standing in the city and a member of the Common Council from 1732 until his death in 1765, was son of Archibald Mickle, who came to Philadelphia in 1683, bringing a certificate from Friends near Lisburn, County Antrim, Ireland.

Joseph Fox was apprenticed by his widowed mother to James Portues, a prominent and wealthy carpenter of Philadelphia. Possessed of more than ordinary intellectual ability, industrious, energetic, and devoted to the interest of his employer, he secured and held the warm attachment of Mr. Portues, who died unmarried, on January 19, 1737, leaving the bulk of his estate to be equally divided between his two executors, Edward Warner, who had also been one of his apprentices, and Joseph Fox.

James Portues had been among the founders of the Carpenters' Company, one of the earliest associations of Pennsylvania, and perhaps the oldest now existing. Both Joseph Fox and Edward Warner became members of the same Company. In 1763 Joseph Fox was chosen Master of the Company, and continued to hold the position until his death. In 1768, the lot on Chestnut Street on which Carpenters Hall now stands, was purchased. Joseph Fox was chairman of the committee to secure the lot and was a generous subscriber to the building fund.

His share of the Portues bequest brought to Mr. Fox much valuable real estate in and around the city. To him came the lot on the west side of Third Street, below Arch. After purchasing an adjoining property he either built the large house thereon or added to one already standing, and there resided for the remainder of his days. The
house, the home of succeeding generations, stood until about the year 1890.

The name of Joseph Fox appears on the records of Philadelphia and Bucks Counties as the holder of mortgages to a very considerable amount. His business undertakings prospered and he accumulated a goodly estate, becoming one of Philadelphia's prominent property-holders. He was frequently called upon to act as executor, guardian, and trustee of large estates. As such his name appears in connection with Benjamin Franklin, Joseph Galloway, James and Israel Pemberton, and others.

Joseph Fox's first public office was that of city commissioner, to which he was elected in October, 1745. In 1748 he was chosen one of the city assessors.

In 1750 he began a long and active career as a member of the Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania. On October 15th of that year he and his colleague, William Clymer, took their seats as the two burgesses or representatives for the city of Philadelphia. Clymer died before the expiration of his year of service, his place being filled by Benjamin Franklin, who up to that time had only acted as clerk of the House, with no voice in its deliberations. That Mr. Fox was at once named for various important committees is evidence of the assured place he already held in the public confidence. In most of the business transacted during the sittings of this Assembly he appears to have taken an active part. Noticeable among the matters presented for consideration at this time was the establishment of the Pennsylvania Hospital, which was favorably received, carefully considered, and finally acted upon. Mr. Fox was one of the earliest contributors for its foundation and gave it active support in later years.

Of the next election, in 1752, John Smith, James Logan's son-in-law, writes in his journal:

"Eighth month 1st. We got home [from Burlington] in the Dark of the Evening. Found the people in a foam of Politicks. . . .
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"2d. Obtained a list of the votes for Officers yesterday. Those for Assemblymen were as follows viz:

Edward Warner . . . . . 1473
Isaac Norris . . . . . 1468
Evan Morgan . . . . . 1457
Joseph Trotter . . . . . 1454
Hugh Evans . . . . . 1448
John Smith. . . . . . 1006
Joshua Morris . . . . . 935
Henry Pauling. . . . . . 930
Isr. Pemberton jr. . . . 543
Joseph Fox . . . . . 330
Ben. Franklin . . . . . 40"

Pemberton, Fox and Franklin were defeated on this ticket. Mr. Smith continues: "I am told some people met & agreed to put Jos: Fox in the County. . . . There was some strife about the choice of Burgesses. The tickets on counting them stood thus:

Benjamin Franklin, . . . . 495
Hugh Roberts . . . . . 473
Joseph Fox . . . . . 391
William Plumsted . . . . 303"

As but two burgesses, or members for the city, were to be elected, Joseph Fox was again on the losing side, although receiving more votes, counting those given him for a County member, than did Franklin, whose supporters were not so divided.

In 1753 Joseph Fox again took his seat, this time and each succeeding year thereafter until October, 1772, representing Philadelphia County.

Immediately after the opening of the Assembly in 1750 he was appointed a member of the "Committee of Accounts." Again in 1753 and in each succeeding year of his long service he thus was chosen, for many years holding the
position of chairman of this most responsible committee. The single exception to his appointment was the year in which he was chosen Speaker at the opening session of the House. His associates on this committee were the most capable and influential members of the Assembly. It devolved upon them to audit and settle the accounts of the General Loan Office, and other public accounts, to sink and destroy the Bills of Credit received in exchange; to count all the moneys, and report, together with the said accounts, the sum they should actually find in the hands of the trustees, with power to send for persons, papers and records. In 1763 he, with others appointed by the House, examined Franklin’s accounts for the time the latter acted as agent for the colony in Great Britain, and certified to their correctness.

Mr. Fox was frequently one of the commissioners for the disbursement of the large sums voted by the House for the defense of the province or for the use of the government. Even after his connection with the Assembly was at an end, he acted in this capacity. One of the items in the account of September, 1774, is the sum paid Joseph Fox, Esq., for his services as a commissioner of the Province.

Another committee on which Mr. Fox served uninterruptedly for many years was that known as the Committee of Grievances (or Aggrievances), which listened to the complaints brought to the Assembly for settlement. These were investigated (and probably some of them adjusted) before being formally presented to the House. For eight of the twelve successive years in which Mr. Fox served on this committee he acted as its chairman. As long as Franklin remained he served as one of its members, being succeeded by Galloway, whose legal knowledge made him especially valuable for the position.

It is an evidence of his acknowledged tact that Mr. Fox was so frequently selected as one of those to wait upon the governor with messages from the Assembly. Owing to the strained conditions which almost invariably existed between the two, this could not have been an agreeable task. On
Biographical Sketch of Joseph Fox.

one occasion the governor vented on the messengers, of whom Mr. Fox was one, such an uncalled-for tirade that his remarks were noted on the minutes, where they may be seen to this day.

In 1763, when Isaac Norris fell ill, Benjamin Franklin was chosen to fill his place as Speaker, and while in office aroused so much opposition that he was not elected to the Assembly the next year.

In October, 1764, Isaac Norris, although far from well, was prevailed upon to again accept the position which he had so ably filled for many years, but before the end of the month he was again obliged to send in his resignation. Writing to Robert Charles, Mr. Norris says:

Our last Elections were carried on by the Parties Concerned with great warmth and eagerness but you will perceive that many of the members of the late Assembly, especially in Chester, Bucks and Lancaster Counties, have been re-elected... on their meeting they unanimously made Choice of me for their Speaker, but after a Week’s Trial I found that the Conduct they were bent upon, and the long Sittings their very warm Debates occasioned, were too great a Burden to my Body & Mind under the present precarious State of my Health, Tho I am much recovered from the extreme Weakness I laboured under ye greatest Part of the last year and therefore I resigned the Chair which has since been filled by Joseph Fox Esq a member returned for Philadelphia County.

Mr. Norris had been asked to reconsider his resignation, but finding him firm in his determination, it is noted on the minutes that Joseph Fox, Esq., was “unanimously chosen” to fill his place. Although the choice of a speaker was in the end unanimous, there was much disturbance and excitement before that condition was arrived at. The following letter, dated October 24, 1764, written to Isaac Norris by John Dickinson, gives an insight into the manner in which Mr. Norris’s resignation was received:

The Members met yesterday at 4 o’Clock and your answer being reported by ye Com. Mr Hughes instantly rose & saying he was sorry

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1 Norris Papers in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
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you could not attend and that it would be inconvenient to defer the public business he thought it proper that a new speaker should be chosen and then mentioning Mr. Ashbridge, called on his partisans immediately to shew their approbation by standing up. About one half the members started up. I rose with them to speak & entreated the members if we were so unhappy as to have forgot a mutual respect for each other; that we should not forget our duty to the publick. The unprecedented precipitancy of this conduct, its indecency, its inconsistency with the message sent to you, the obligation we were under of waiting a little while for your assistance in matters of such vast importance as would come under our consideration were insisted on by several members. Uproar, rage and confusion filled the room. Mr. Fox said the house was not to be deceived by such tricks and that you had told some members you could be of more service to you on the floor.

Several of the county members seemed to be unwilling to proceed so tumultuously & you some difficulty we persuaded ye mem's to adjourn to four this afternoon.²

The first important business transacted after Mr. Fox took the chair was the appointment of Benjamin Franklin as agent to England.

At the opening of the new assembly in 1765 Joseph Fox was again “unanimously chosen speaker.” In 1766 he was succeeded by Joseph Galloway, chosen by “a majority of votes.” In May, 1769, Galloway in his turn fell ill and again Joseph Fox was chosen speaker for the remainder of the term.

While Mr. Fox held this office, in 1764, delegates were chosen for what has since been known as the stamp act congress, when “Mr. Speaker, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Bryan and Mr. Morton were appointed to that service.” The Pennsylvania Gazette of September 26, 1765, notes: “The gentlemen appointed by the assembly to assist at the general congress at New York, we hear set out this day for that place.”

Ford² says that, although appointed, Joseph Fox did not attend the congress. Coming at the end of the session and directly before the election (shortly after which the new

¹ Norris Papers in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
Assembly were to take their seats), it was probably necessary for the speaker to remain in Philadelphia.

In 1765, it was "ordered that the Committee of Correspondence do acquaint Mr. Jackson and Mr. Franklin, the Agents in London, the House request that all their letters and public affairs, may be addressed to the present Speaker, Joseph Fox Esq. or to a majority of the said Committee, in order that the same be regularly laid before the House." One of the letters sent according to these instructions still exists, being addressed by Benjamin Franklin to Joseph Fox, Esq., and is dated London, March 1, 1766, notifying him that the Stamp Act is about to be repealed, and making mention of another letter sent shortly before.

This was doubtless one of many such communications, now lost.

The Committee of Correspondence was another of those on which Mr. Fox invariably served, except when holding the position of Speaker. It was at first composed of but three members, of whom Franklin, while still in the Province, was one. Franklin was also Mr. Fox's associate on the committee to revise the minutes of the Assembly and prepare them for printing. This committee, a standing one, was at first composed of Joseph Fox and Benjamin Franklin alone. In 1757 Franklin was succeeded by Galloway, and the Speaker was added to the number, from which time no change in the members was made until 1763, when we find it composed of Fox, Dickinson, and the Speaker. Ability in the same line caused Mr. Fox to be frequently called upon to assist in framing of laws, draughting of bills, preparing messages to the governor, or answers to those sent by him to the Assembly, all requiring the greatest wisdom and prudence.

Mr. Fox attended, by appointment of the Assembly, the Indian conferences at Easton and Lancaster in 1756 and 1757, but declined to act as one of the commissioners at Fort Pitt in 1768.

He was for many years trustee of Province Island. This was a low island of three hundred and forty-two acres
on the southwest side of the Schuylkill, near its mouth, purchased in 1741 by the province, held as a quarantine station, and on which was established a "pest-house." Besides the buildings used for hospital purposes there were others, leased to tenants.

On January 22, 1757, Joseph Fox was appointed one of the superintendents of the State House, in place of Edward Warner, deceased. In 1762 it was deemed advisable to entrust both the State House and grounds to trustees, and accordingly Isaac Norris, Thomas Leech, Joseph Fox, Samuel Rhoads, Joseph Galloway, John Baynton, and Edward Penington were appointed.

Watson tells us that the State House square was walled in with a high brick wall, and at the centre of the Walnut Street wall was a ponderous high gate and massive brick structure over the top of it, placed there by Joseph Fox.

Samuel Foulke, an active and useful member of the Assembly from Bucks County, 1761-68, in his journal under date of January 2, 1763/4, gives an account of one of the many long debates which engaged in the House, in regard to the method to be used in raising the money for the government of the colony, debates as warm as those of the present day, although their noise and bitterness have long since passed away. In this case the controversy kept the House chiefly employed for about four weeks.

John Penn, the new governor, had but lately arrived, under great restrictions as to any liberties he might feel inclined to grant to the colonists. Money must be raised. Franklin and his followers were for adopting a new method, which they contended would enable the colonists to avoid dispute with the proprietaries; while the conservatives were in favor of the old fashion of acceding to the dictates of the higher authorities. According to the journal: "There Arose Very Serious & Arduous debates, in which B. Franklin & John Dickenson Greatly distinguished themselves, ye first as a politition, the other as an Orator . . . . The Chief Speakers on ye other side [i.e., in favor of the Proprie-
tors] were, Jos. Galloway, Jos. Fox, G. Ashbridge, &c, tho' ye first Named had to my appre[hen]sion much ye advantage of ye latter in reason & argument, yet to my great surprise, when the Question was put, it was Carried in favour of ye propriet's."¹ On several occasions Joseph Fox was among those appointed to sign paper money.

This summary does not begin to enumerate all of Mr. Fox's activities as a Representative. The minutes show him taking part in a large majority of the measures which came before the House. Small matters as well as great received attention. He was on committees to regulate the size of loaves of bread, to regulate the nightly watch of the city, to consider the petition against the firing of guns on New Year's Eve, etc., etc.

But the long years in the Assembly came to an end at last. The election returns in October, 1772, do not show the name of Joseph Fox. Benjamin Franklin, writing from London to Abel James under the date of December 2, 1772, says:

I do not at this Distance understand the Politics of your last Election why so many of the Members Declin'd Service, and why yourself and Mr Fox were omitted (which I much regret) while Goddard was voted for by so great a number. Another Year I hope will set all right. The People seldom continue long in the wrong, when it is nobody's Interest to mislead them . . . . And tho' it may be inconvenient to your private Affairs to attend Publick Business, I hope neither you nor Mr Fox will thro' Resentment of the present Slight decline the Service when again called upon by your Country.

When it became necessary to erect barracks in Philadelphia, for housing the soldiery, the House resolved, on May 3, 1758, "that Joseph Fox be made Barrack Master, with full power to do and perform every matter and thing which may be requisite for the comfortable accommodation of his Majestye's troops within the Barracks lately erected in the city." This position he held until the time of the Revolution. On November 1, 1775, the Assembly directed

¹Penna. Magazine of Hist. and Biog., vol. v, p. 68.
that Mr. Miles and Mr. Dougherty should deliver to Joseph Fox, the barrack-master, the order that required him hereafter to comply with such orders as the Committee of Safety should issue, as to providing necessaries and quartering the troops. "These directions mark the period when, from the occupancy of the regular British troops, the barracks passed into the tenancy of the soldiers who were opposed to them." Mr. Fox replied that the barracks would be ready for the troops in about ten days. His salary as barrack-master was paid to February, 1776. Major Lewis Nicola succeeded to the position as early as the middle of March of that year. Until the delivery of the orders as above Mr. Fox appears to have had unlimited authority in this position. From time to time there were sums spent for disbursements of clothing, firewood, candles, vinegar, small beer, bedding, and the like; for quarters put up and furnished for the officers; but more frequently the amounts expended were given without detail. In testimony of the manner in which the duties of the barrack-master were performed is the following: "July 23, 1774. Mr Speaker laid before the House a letter from Major Hamilton, Commanding Officer at the Barracks of this city, which was read by order, and is as follows:

PHILADELPHIA, July 21, 1774.

Sir:  
I take the liberty to inform you that his Majesty's troops under my command stand much in need of the aid of the Legislature of this Province; their bedding, utensils and apartments require inspection and repairs. I have had the pleasure of knowing this Barrack these seven years, and shall always be happy in declaring that no troops have been better supplied, nor any applications from commanding officers more politely attended to than here, from which I am encouraged to hope, that the House of Assembly will, during this sitting, order the necessary inspection, and afford such a supply as their generosity and judgment shall dictate. I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Your most obedient humble servant,

ISAAC HAMILTON
When barracks were established at Lancaster, Mr. Fox was the first barrack-master appointed.

Of the active part he took in the preparation for the struggle of the Revolution there is ample evidence. When other members of the Society of Friends in 1756, refused reëlection or resigned from the Assembly, Joseph Fox followed his conviction, that taking up arms was in some cases a necessity, and continued in the public service for many years thereafter, although the Friends note him as "having violated our testimony against war," and in consequence had disowned him from their Society on 4 mo. 30, 1756.

His name stands third on the list of signers of the Non-Importation Agreement in 1765. In this connection may be mentioned a meeting at the State House on September 27, 1770, called in response to an advertisement which was published in the papers and distributed in hand-bills around the city and suburbs. The call was as follows: "Many respectable Freeholders and Inhabitants of this city and county, justly alarmed at the Resolution formed by a number of the Dry Goods Importers, on Thursday last at Davenport's Tavern, which reflect dishonour on this city and province, earnestly request the Freemen of this city and county to meet in the State-house This Afternoon, at Three O'clock, to consider and determine what is proper to be done to vindicate the Honour of this City, and to avert the danger that threatens their Country."

The result of this notice was that "A large Body of respectable Inhabitants assembled at the Time and Place appointed, and having unanimously chosen Joseph Fox, Esq., Chairman" they passed nine resolutions, the first of which was, "That the claim of Parliament to tax the Colonies, and particularly the Act imposing Duties on Tea, &c., for the Purpose of raising a Revenue in America, is subversive of the constitutional Rights of the Colonies. Everything was conducted with the greatest order and decorum. Business being over the thanks of the company were voted to the Chairman for his services."
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In Hiltzheimer's diary, which will be referred to later, on the date of the meeting, is this entry: “This afternoon went to Town meeting at the State House, where it was agreed that further non-importation was necessary, a few articles only excepted. Joseph Fox, who was chairman, requested Charles Thomson to speak for him.” This request was certainly not because of any lack on his own part, but in recognition of Charles Thomson’s remarkable ability.

When Paul Revere after his famous ride from Boston reached Philadelphia on May 20, 1774, a meeting was called at the City Tavern, when a committee was appointed to act as a general Committee of Correspondence, and also particularly to write to the people of Boston assuring them of sympathy, commending their firmness, declaring their cause to be that of all the Colonies, and promising to stand fast for the right. This Committee consisted of John Dickinson, William Smith, Edward Penington, Joseph Fox, John Nixon, John Maxwell Nesbit, Samuel Howell, Thomas Mifflin, Joseph Reed, Thomas Wharton, Jr., Benjamin Marshall, Joseph Moulder, Thomas Barclay, George Clymer, Charles Thomson, Jeremiah Warder Jr., John Cox, John Gibson, and Thomas Penrose. The next day they again met (Mr. Fox being among those then absent, as was Dickinson, who probably wrote the answer) and delivered a letter to Mr. Revere to take back to Boston.

On August 18, 1775, in the minutes of the Committee of Safety it is recorded that “Joseph Fox, one of the Commissioners for this County, waited on this Board acquainting them that it was found impossible to get completed in any reasonable time the firelocks for this County, unless it be permitted that they make use of such locks as they can procure.” On October 7, 1775, it is reported that a copy of yesterday’s minute of the Board relative to the making of the arms ordered by the Assembly was presented to Joseph Fox, who assured them that he would communicate it to the Board of Commissioners and Assessors, and that he
would use his best endeavors to promote that necessary business. On the 23rd of the same month Mr. Fox reported that he was ready and desirous to employ persons to make the number of firelocks required by the note of the Assembly, but could not get workmen to undertake to make them. He afterward made application for five hundred pounds to advance to the gunsmiths.

Christopher Marshall informs us that Joseph Fox was spokesman for the Committee which on January 18, 1775, waited on the Carpenters' Company for the use of their Hall for the meeting of the Provincial Committee. The price asked was ten shillings a day. Marshall also writes under date of October 4th, 1776: "Some day this week Joseph Fox and John Reynolds refused to take the Continental Money for large sums due them by bond, mortgage, &c., as it is said." Perhaps this is why in Scharf & Westcott's History of Philadelphia it is stated that Joseph Fox developed Tory proclivities. That the British did not consider him an ally is proven by the diary of Robert Morton, of Philadelphia, written while the city was occupied by the British. On November 22, 1777, he writes: "They have destroyed most of the houses along the lines except William Henry's, which remains entire and untouched, while J. Fox and Dr. Moner and several others are hastening to ruin."

There is no evidence that Mr. Fox had taken part in public affairs for some time before he took, on the 25th of July, 1777, the oath of allegiance to the state of Pennsylvania, the form of which was as follows: "We, the subscribers, do swear (or affirm) that we renounce and refuse all allegiance to George Third, King of Great Britain, his heirs and successors and that we will be faithful and bear true allegiance to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a free and independent state, and that we will not at any time do, or cause to be done anything that will be prejudicial or injurious to the freedom and independence thereof, as declared by Congress and also that we will discover and make known to some one justice of the peace of the said State, all treasons
and conspiracies which we now know on hereafter shall know to be formed against this or any of the United States of America." His son Joseph subscribed to the same two days later.

Strong as the above may seem, it was concluded that it did not cover all the ground required. In the autumn of the following year both Joseph Fox, gentleman, and Joseph Fox, Jr., subscribed this form: "I (the subscriber hereof) do solemnly and sincerely declare and swear (or affirm) that the State of Pennsylvania is and of right ought to be a free, sovereign and Independent State. And I do forever renounce and refuse all allegiance, subjection and obedience to the king or Crown of Great Britain; and I do further swear (or solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm) that I never have since the Declaration of Independence, directly or indirectly aided, assisted, abetted or in any wise countenanced the King of Great Britain, his generals, fleets, armies or their adherents in their claims upon these United States, and that I have ever since the Declaration of Independence thereof demeaned myself as a faithful citizen and subject to this or some one of the United States, and that I will at all times maintain and support the freedom sovereignty and independence thereof, so help me God."

In 1777, while the British occupied Philadelphia, the city was for a time so closely surrounded that the troops inside suffered for want of blankets and provisions, in order to procure which a petition to the citizens was signed by a great number of residents who remained in the city, Joseph Fox being among them.

In strong contrast with the more serious occupations of Mr. Fox are the mentions found in Hiltzheimer's Diary. Under date of December 30, 1765, is written: "Dined at Garlick Hall on invitation of Robert Erwin, with Joseph Fox, Thomas Willing, William Parr, Joseph Wharton," etc.

"March 19, 1766, attended Robert Smith's house warming with Joseph Fox, John Lawrence, Samuel Mifflin," etc.
"August 20, 1766, Robert Erwin gave a beefsteak dinner at the Bettering House\(^1\) to J. Fox, Jacob Lewis," etc.

"January 1, 1767, Very, very cold. Delaware frozen over. Three sleigh-loads of us went to Darby to Joseph Rudolph's, Joseph Fox, Robert Smith, Robert Erwin and wife," etc.

"February 27, 1768. Attended a barbecue at Robert Smith's country place and from there went to William Jones' Greenwich Hall with the following gentlemen, Jo\(^6\) Fox, Samuel Morris, Samuel Miles," etc.

"July 10, 1767. Went this afternoon with John Backhouse and Thomas Shoemaker up to Joseph Galloway's place to dine with Daniel Wister, William Wister, Timothy Matlack, John [doubtless intended for Joseph] Fox," etc.

"October 9, 1768. Dined at Galloway's place with Israel Waters, Daniel Wister, Jacob Barge, Joseph Fox," etc.

Then come three dinners at Greenwich Hall, on November 5, 1768, (on beefsteaks,) April 15, 1769 (on fish,) with Joseph Galloway, Joseph Fox, etc.; and on December 2, 1769, with Thomas Lawrence, Joseph Fox and others.

Unfortunately there is a lapse in the Diary, by which we probably lose much that would have been of interest. When the entries again begin we find the dinners still continued at intervals. "On November 6, 1773—Went down with Mr. Lawrence and Allen to Robert Erwin's place called Primfield, to dine on beefsteaks with a number of gentlemen," of whom was Joseph Fox.

At Greenwich Hall, that favorite resort, Mr. Fox dined with others on February 5, 1774, and three days later Mr. Hiltzheimer invited Timothy Matlack and Joseph Fox to go with him to see weighed the carcass of his great six-year-old steer, Roger. The weight we are told was 1332 pounds. On the twelfth of February Mr. Fox was

\(^1\) An odd place for a dinner. The Bettering House was a kindlier name for the Alms House, in the early Quaker days.
Biographical Sketch of Joseph Fox.

one of the guests at Mullins', on the Schuylkill, where they dined on "Roger" beefsteaks.

On March first of the same year Joseph Fox, Michael Hillegas and others went to Province Island to attend the vendue of Samuel Penrose, and dined at the ferry house.

The last item in this connection which the Diary gives, is under date of September 10, 1774, when a part of the new gaol, opposite the State House, was raised. Joseph Fox and Edward Duffield, the managers, gave the workmen a supper and subsequently asked a few of their friends to dine with them in the northeast corner of the building.

Of other festivities we have intimation in the Votes of the Assembly. One of these was when, on August 20, 1756, soon after William Denny was installed as governor, the clerk of the Assembly was ordered to see that a handsome dinner was provided, "next second day," at the State House, for "the present and late governor, Governor's Council, Mayor and Corporation, Officers, Civil and Military, Clergy and strangers now residing in the city."

Joseph Fox was member of the Fort St. David's Fishing Company, a social club of the times, afterwards merged with the State of Schuylkill Fishing Company, an organization still in active existence.

A side light is thrown on the character of Joseph Fox by letters written by James Tilghman and William Allen, commissioners of property, to Thomas Penn. In 1766 Mr. Tilghman writes:

Honored Sir:

A case has lately occurred—the first of its kind since I had the Secretary's office—in which I must beg leave to trouble you for your direction.

Mr. Joseph Fox, a member of the Assembly, a person of some influence in the City, and I believe at present not indifferent to the Government, a good many years ago purchased some old Rights of Liberty Lands *** and now applies for a warrant to take up the Liberty Lands **** I shall not do anything in the affair until I can be instructed. *** Mr. Fox pressed the matter very much, and thought hard to wait an answer from you, and intimated a design to do himself
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Justice, upon which some warmth passed between us, since which I have not heard of the matter. I shall be obliged for your instructions as soon as it may be convenient to you.

Whether any attention was paid to this or (as was the custom with the descendants of the Founder) Thomas Penn left the matter to right itself, we do not know, but Fox having made his claim did not suffer it to rest, for William Allen, two years later, writing of the same matter says:

PHILADA. Feb'y. 27th, 1768.

SIR:

Since writing a long letter by this opportunity I have recollected something that has frequently been the subject of conversation between Mr. Tilghman and me, which he says he mentioned to you sometime since, and on which he promised again to write to you, and desired me to do the same, which is an application to the office from Mr. Joseph Fox, who was Speaker of the Assembly two years ago. The case stands thus. He conceiving that he had right to use some liberty-land had made a bargain with a man who has overplus lands within his lines, and having improved the land, and not caring to have any future disputes was desirous to buy rights to cover the overplus.

It seems the liberty-land of some old right belonging to Mr. Fox had not been surveyed within the liberty, but, as it is said, was included in the surveys made in the usual way in other parts of the Country, which fact Mr. Fox conceives no way clear, but admitting it had been so, he conceives, and is so told by his Lawyer, that by the words of your father's grants, the purchasers are intitled to lots on liberty land. There are precedents both ways in the office; Though, of late, chiefly against him. He is a man of wealth, but no way avaritious, of great spirit, and esteemed a very honest man; he at present heartily wishes he never had been entangled with the bargain; but as he has entered into it, he thinks his reputation is concerned in the affair, as he may be reflected on of having sold lands for which he had no title, for which reason he has it much at heart to compleat his bargain on the foot of the claim he makes. * * * * *

The president of your allowing him to laying his rights in the manner he desires cannot be injurious to your interest, as that matter is now over, but may rather be of service with regard to overplus-land in other parts of the Country, as that a man of his Character Thought it but right to cover Overplus land with other rights.

I would not have presumed to have troubled you on this head, but as I have, and perhaps for some short time longer may be ingaged in our
Political disputes, and Mr. Fox has zealously cooperated with me in our Assembly in opposing the extravagant conduct of a malignant party among us, I think he has in this great merit; he formerly had been as well as many others, lead away by the specious pretences of that party. But for near four years past, having seen into their designs, he has frequently told them that their schemes were so bad that an honest man could not act with them. He has shown himself, to the great regret of the party, one of the warmest friends of the Government; was greatly instrumental in restoring peace for this two years past, for which they ousted him from the Speaker's chair, and he is at present, except myself, the most obnoxious to them of any person: They have this present session used many arts to bring him into their measures, fawned, cajoled and threatened him, but he laughs them to scorn, and in our late disputes opposed their violent and truly ridiculous measures with a becoming zeal.

I need not hint to you that in Government affairs some things may be done prudentially, and I hope and request that this matter may be seen at least in this light, and that an honest man, though he should be mistaken in what he conceives to be his right, should be rather encouraged than otherwise, to persist in his duty.

I should not have presumed to have said so much upon this head, but I conceive your readily assenting to his application may be of use to your friends and tend to strengthen their hands, and can be no way prejudicial to you.

It is from such sources alone that there must be gleaned anything of the personal life of Joseph Fox, for he left no records; indeed so far as is known there is not a letter written by him in existence. A few pieces of furniture once owned by him and a number of signatures to public documents are the only things that can now be associated with him and his life of many activities.

**Issue of Joseph and Elizabeth (Mickle) Fox:**

Thomasine Mickle Fox, born June 15, 1748; died November 7, 1821; married February 20, 1772, at Philadelphia Meeting, George Roberts, born 1737; died September 17, 1821, son of Hugh and Mary (Calvert) Roberts. Had issue.

Hannah Fox, born October 9, 1750; died February 19, 1824; unmarried.

Elizabeth Fox, born December 26, 1752; died June 16, 1758.
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Samuel Mickle Fox, born August 18, 1754; died February 18, 1755.
Justinian Fox, born August 12, 1755; died February 25, 1756.
Joseph Mickle Fox, born September 15, 1757; died January 18, 1784, as the result of a fall from his horse.
George Fox, born November 27, 1759; died September, 1828; married (1) Mary Pemberton; (2) Mary Dickinson.
Samuel Mickle Fox, born September 9, 1761; died October 17, 1762.
Samuel Mickle Fox, born October 4, 1763; died April 30, 1808; married Sarah Pleasants.
Elizabeth Fox, born July 16, 1765; died September 25, 1765.
Elizabeth Fox, born April 13, 1757; died July 18, 1757.
Elizabeth Fox, born June 30, 1768; died July 19, 1768.
Elizabeth Hill Fox, born October 14, 1771; died January 23, 1861; married Joseph Parker Norris.

George Fox, son of Joseph and Elizabeth (Mickle) Fox, born November 27, 1759; died September —, 1828; married (1) in Philadelphia Meeting, November 25, 1789, Mary Pemberton, born March 25, 1771; died July 2, 1801, only daughter of Charles and Esther (House) Pemberton; married (2) October 3, 1803, Mary Dickinson who died March 28, 1822, daughter of Philemon and Mary (Cadwalader) Dickinson.

George Fox graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1780.
In 1784 he was made a member of the Philosophical Society; in 1789–91, 1812–28, he was a trustee of the University of Pennsylvania, and in 1800 represented the city in the Assembly.

George Fox was at one time owner of the largest part of the Franklin papers. (See the introduction to Smyth's Life of Benjamin Franklin.) Franklin by his will bequeathed all his manuscripts and papers to William Temple Franklin, his grandson, who culled out what he imagined to be the most important of the manuscripts and carried them to London with the intention of devoting himself to editing them.

The papers left by him in Philadelphia, by far the greater part of the whole collection, he bequeathed to his friend
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George Fox, by whose family the most of them were presented to the American Philosophical Society, and the rest finally came into the possession of the University of Pennsylvania.

Issue of George and Mary (Pemberton) Fox:

Charles Pemberton Fox, born July 3, 1792; died October 10, 1866; unmarried. Graduated at the University of Pennsylvania in 1811; joined the First City Troop in 1813; was made Corporal in 1816 and rose to the position of Quarter Master Sergeant in 1822.

Eliza Mary Pemberton Fox, born May 30, 1794; died May 17, 1873; married February 18, 1819, John Roberts Tunis, who died October 30, 1819. No issue.

Esther Pemberton Fox, born October 25, 1797; died July 24, 1798.

Issue of George and Mary (Dickinson) Fox:

Joseph Dickinson Fox, born 1804; died October 19, 1825; graduate of the class of 1824, at the University of Pennsylvania.

Mary Dickinson Fox, born December 13, 1807; died February 19, 1895, at Champlost, unmarried.

Samuel Mickle Fox, son of Joseph and Elizabeth (Mickle) Fox, married November 27, 1788, Sarah Pleasants, daughter of Samuel and Mary (Pemberton) Pleasants. Samuel M. Fox was one of the incorporators of the Bank of Pennsylvania in 1793 and in 1796 became its president, which position he held until his death. He invested largely in land in the western part of the State, part of which was many years later the centre of the petroleum industry.

Elizabeth Mickle Fox, born October 15, 1791; died October 10, 1872; unmarried.

Hannah Morris Fox, born December 13, 1793; died April 3, 1866; unmarried.

Ann Pleasants Fox, born October 28, 1795; died January 16, 1861; married July 28, 1829, George Newbold, born May 29, 1780; died September 8, 1858.

Caroline Fox, born March 19, 1797; died September 19, 1804.

Sarah Pemberton Fox, born August 26, 1798; died June 6, 1873; unmarried.
Samuel Mickle Fox, born March 29, 1800; died December 19, 1849, in New York City; married October 17, 1826, Eliza de Grasse Depau, born November 20, 1803; died August 20, 1864; daughter of Francis and Silvia (De Grasse) Depau. He took his degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1819, after which he studied medicine, but relinquished the practice of it in 1828 to remove to New York where he became a member of the firm of Bolton, Fox and Livingston, and so continued until his death. Left issue.

Louisa G. Fox, born March 15, 1802; died January 19, 1874; unmarried.

Emeline Fox, born June 23, 1803; died November 19, 1882; unmarried.

George Fox, born January 31, 1805; died August 29, 1805.

George Fox, born May 28, 1806; died December 27, 1882; married Sarah D. Valentine.

Caroline Fox, born August 28, 1807; died January 19, 1859; unmarried.

Joseph Mickle Fox, (son of Samuel and Sarah (Pleasants) Fox), married April 6, 1820, Hannah Emlen, born in Philadelphia February 6, 1790; died November 11, 1869; daughter of George and Sarah (Fishbourne) Emlen.

Joseph M. Fox studied law and was admitted to the Philadelphia Bar on September 7, 1812. At the time of his marriage he was practicing his profession in Bellefonte, Centre County, but shortly thereafter removed to Meadville, Pennsylvania. He purchased from the trustees under his father's will, twelve tracts, comprising thirteen thousand acres of land in the western part of the State.

In 1827 he, with his wife and son, settled on one of these tracts, at the junction of the Allegheny and Clarion rivers, where was established the home about which the town of Foxburg afterwards grew. Joseph M. Fox was elected state senator in 1829.

The only child of Joseph and Hannah (Emlen) Fox was Samuel Mickle Fox, born in Philadelphia, June 29, 1821; died at Foxburg, December 25, 1869. He married June 28, 1849, Mary Rodman Fisher, daughter of William Logan and Sarah (Lindley) Fisher. They had five children, viz: Joseph Mickle Fox, who died in infancy; William Logan
Fox, who married Rebecca Clifford Hollingsworth, and died without issue; Joseph Mickle Fox married Emily A. Read, and has issue; Sarah Lindley Fox, who died June 20, 1882, unmarried; and Hannah Fox.

George Fox, M.D., son of Samuel M. and Sarah (Pleasant) Fox, born in Philadelphia, May 8, 1806, died there December 27, 1882; married September 25, 1850, Sarah Downing Valentine, daughter of George and Mary (Downing) Valentine of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. Dr. Fox was a physician and surgeon of high standing and ability, and a consistent member of the Society of Friends. Dr. Fox and his wife, Sarah D. Valentine, had children, Samuel Mickle Fox, married September 25, 1890, Elizabeth Richards Newbold; died March 19, 1905, leaving issue, George Fox, married October 20, 1875, Margaret Loper Baird, and has issue; Joseph Mickle Fox, married October 4, 1893, Jean Beverly Chichester, and has issue; Charles Pemberton Fox, married May 19, 1906, Mary Large; Mary Valentine Fox, married April 23, 1883, William Wayne; Sarah Fox, married June 10, 1891, George W. Norris.