



Haverford Township Historical Society



THOMAS ELLIS (16xx-1688)

Compiled by Richard D. Kerr

[The following is excerpted from History of Delaware County, Pennsylvania by George Smith M.D., published by Henry B. Ashmead in Philadelphia in 1862.]

THOMAS ELLIS was one of the most eminent of the Welsh settlers. He came from Pembrokeshire, and arrived here in 1683 with his second wife Ellen and family, and settled on one of two large tracts of land which he purchased and located in Haverford. His certificate, which is from the monthly meeting of Redstone, speaks of him as a man "of a tender spirit, often broken before the Lord, with the sense of the power of an endless being upon him." It also informs us, that "his testimony for the Lord, and his Truth hath been very weighty, to the reaching of the consciences of many," and that he had "an excellent gift in opening deepe divine Misteryes." His imprisonments "had been many and difficult with spoyling of goods on truth's accompt." Having escaped from a land of bitter persecution, his feelings prompted him, immediately after his arrival here, to compose "in British language" the following "Song of Rejoyceing," which "was turned into English by his friend John Humphrey:"

"Pennsylvania an habitation,
With certain, sure and clear foundation;
Where the dawning of the day,
Expels the thick, dark night away.

Lord, give us here a place to feed,
And pass my life among thy seed,
That in our bounds, true love and peace,
From age to age may never cease.

Then shall the trees and fields increase,
Heaven and Earth proclaim thy peace,
That we and they—forever Lord,
Show forth thy praise, with one accord."

Though a resident of Haverford, Thomas Ellis spent much of his time in Philadelphia, where he held public trusts under the government. He also travelled in the ministry. At the time of his death, which happened in 1688, he held the office of Register General of Pennsylvania, with David Lloyd as his deputy. His wife died in 1692. By his second wife he had but one child, Rachel Ellis, who intermarried with Robert Wharton, in 1701. By a former marriage, he had one son, Ellis Ellis, and a daughter, Eleanor Ellis, who intermarried with David Lawrence. He was interred at Friends' burying ground, Haverford.

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