



# Haverford Township Historical Society



## JANE (FENN) HOSKINS (1693-1764)

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.]*

**JANE HOSKINS**, whose maiden name was Fenn, was a noted preacher in the Society of Friends. She was born in London in 1693, and in her sixteenth year became the subject of a religious impression that it was her duty to visit Pennsylvania. She lost sight of this impression for a time, but it returned stronger than ever, and in her nineteenth year she yielded implicit obedience. She accompanied a Welshman named Robert Davis, who emigrated with his family, and arrived in Philadelphia in 1712. Davis had paid her passage, under a promise of repayment, out of her first earnings in America. Growing uneasy, he insisted that she should bind herself as a servant four years, which being contrary to her agreement with him, she resisted; whereupon he had recourse to the law, and caused her imprisonment. She was relieved by four Friends of Plymouth, who paid Davis, and employed her to teach their children.

This was her first acquaintance with the Quakers. In the beginning she attended their meetings rather as a spy, but she soon became convinced of the truth of their doctrines, and of the propriety of their practices, and after many weighty exercises united with the Society, and soon afterwards appeared in the ministry.

Some time after the expiration of her term with the four Plymouth Friends she removed to Haverford. One First Day at Haverford Meeting, David Lloyd and his wife, from Chester, came in, and at once the impression came strongly on Jane that "these were the people with whom she must go and settle." David and his wife had fixed their eyes on the young woman, and had come to the conclusion that "she was or would be a preacher." They "were tendered" towards her, "and it was fixed in their minds to take her under their care, and nurse her for the Lord's service." She eventually, in 1719, became an inmate of David Lloyd's house, and a member of his family. She frequently spoke in meetings, and made journeys "in the service of truth," to the other provinces, often accompanied by Elizabeth Levis, afterwards Shipley. In 1727 she visited Great Britain and Ireland in the same service.

In 1738 she was married to Joseph Hoskins, of Chester. Jane Hoskins was a woman of undoubted ability, and her peculiar temperament eminently fitted her for the ministry.

©2016-2018 by Haverford Township Historical Society. Personal non-commercial use permitted; all other rights reserved.