

**EXCERPT: From *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania, Volume One, 1682-1709*, pp. 728-730**

**For complete essay see *Lawmaking and Legislators in Pennsylvania, Volume One, 1682-1709*, pp. 728-31**

**Nicholas Waln**

(Wallne/Walne)

ASSEMBLY: Bucks Co. 1683, 1687, 1688, 1689, 1691, 1692, 1695; Phila. Co. 1696, 1697, 1700a, 1701, 1703, 1713, 1714, 1715, 1717

b. c. 1650, Burholme, Slaidburn parish, West Riding, Yorks., Eng. arr. 22 Oct. 1682. d. 4 Feb. 1722. Father: Richard Waln (c. 1620-1659). Mother: Jane Rudd (Waln) (d. 1669).<sup>1</sup> m. 1673 Jane Turner; children: Jane, m. Samuel Allen, son of Samuel Allen\*; Margaret (d. 1678?);<sup>2</sup> Richard; Margaret (b. 1683); Hannah; Mary; Ellen; Sarah; John; Elizabeth; Nicholas; William.<sup>3</sup> Brother-in-law: James Dilworth.\* Offices: Bucks Co.: sheriff, 1685-86; JP, 1687-93.

Nicholas Waln, of Yorkshire, settled in Pennsylvania, where he became a prominent Quaker minister and legislator, serving 17 terms in the Assembly, albeit remaining generally in the background.

Born in the West Riding of Yorkshire to Quaker parents, Waln followed their religion, attending Bowland Meeting. In 1678, with two other tenants of Christopher Monck, second duke of Albemarle, Waln was summoned to appear at the Slaidburn manor court for refusing to swear on oath. Waln secured the assistance of the Quaker Meeting for Sufferings, which probably enabled him to retain his land, held from Albemarle as lord of the manor. In June 1682 Settle Monthly Meeting issued a certificate of removal to seven families that included Waln, his wife Jane, and their three children, who immigrated to Pennsylvania on the *Lamb*, of Liverpool, which arrived in the colony in October 1682.<sup>4</sup>

Waln had purchased the right to 1000 acres from William Penn in April 1682. Upon arrival in the colony, Waln had his acreage surveyed in four 250-acre tracts in Bucks County on both sides of Neshaminy Creek in what became Middletown Township. In May 1686 and November 1692 he purchased from Thomas Holme\* and Elizabeth Bennett, respectively, tracts of 118 acres and 340 acres along the same creek. Waln resided in Bucks County until 1696; by December 1697 he had sold all of his Bucks County properties. He had been assessed in 1693 for Middletown Township at £100, the fourth highest for that township, but far less than some of the noted Bucks County leaders such as William Biles,\* John Swift,\* and Joseph Growdon.\* Waln moved to the Northern Liberties of Philadelphia, where over the years he had purchased 651 acres. His estate there was rated at £150 in 1696, the fifth highest assessment in the area. Waln also acquired 400 acres in Bristol Township and received as a result of his original purchase two Philadelphia city lots on High Street. By 1716 he had apparently sold 489 acres of his county properties.<sup>5</sup>

In Bucks County, Waln served as either a sheriff or justice of the peace from 1685 to 1693. He was also a prominent and active Quaker minister. He held the first gathering of Neshaminy Monthly Meeting, in January 1684, at his home; in all, 21 meetings were held there until a meetinghouse was constructed. He also hosted 16 gatherings of the Bucks Quarterly Meeting. After moving to Philadelphia, he attended at least 124 sessions (out of 300) of Philadelphia Monthly Meeting between 1698 and 1722, and 69 sessions (out of 97) of Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting. He was also a representative to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting either for Neshaminy Monthly Meeting, Bucks Quarterly Meeting, or Philadelphia Quarterly Meeting 25 times between 1684 and 1721. In 1692 Waln clearly sided with orthodox Friends against George Keith by signing the September Philadelphia Yearly Meeting epistle to London, the two June letters sent by 28 Quaker ministers to England and to colonial monthly and quarterly meetings, and the August epistle of Bucks Quarterly Meeting to Friends in general, all of which strongly condemned Keith and his supporters.<sup>6</sup>

Waln was elected to the 1683 Assembly that revised the Frame of Government, but he did not serve again until 1687. Although not verified, Waln most likely sat in the 1682 Assembly, given his future service for the county, and having arrived there a month before the November election. In any event, his role in the 1683 and 1687 sessions, which lasted a total of 25 days, is not specified in the minutes. He was only moderately active in the nine-day Assembly of 1688 but played a more significant role the following year. On 11 May 1689 he was named to a committee of two members from each county to consider the petition from John White\* and to redress grievances. That committee ultimately responded rather harshly to Governor John Blackwell's lengthy introductory speech to the Assembly and also challenged the arrest of White as a breach of privilege of the House. It also demanded that all persons commissioned by the governor to receive fines or forfeitures accruing to him be forbidden to sit in judgment in any court in causes where such a fine or forfeiture would occur. However, Waln was one of the members who on 20 May 1689 boycotted the session as a protest at the increasingly extreme direction the House was taking in the White affair. The members who attended that day resolved that absent members such as Waln were not to receive any salary for their service and should not be chosen again.<sup>7</sup>

Clearly, the voters of Bucks County did not support the effort to prevent men like Waln from serving again, for they elected him to the assemblies of 1691 and 1692. The minutes for the 1691 session are not extant, but in May of that year Waln signed a letter with 25 other provincial members of the legislature to Penn that angrily denounced the Lower Counties representatives for boycotting the session and attacked Penn's former choice of John Blackwell as governor. In the 1692 Assembly Waln served on a significant ten-man committee, including White, Caleb Pusey,\* George Maris,\* and John Swift, to amend or alter the continuation bill and any other laws they saw fit. Two days later Waln was named with seven colleagues to amend or alter the bill relating to serious crimes. That same day, he joined Pusey, White, and three others in assisting the speaker in putting the minutes in good order.<sup>8</sup>

Waln did not serve in any capacity during the tenure of Governor Benjamin Fletcher, but he was again elected to the Assembly in 1695 when it considered but did not enact a new Frame of Government. Waln was named to a joint legislative committee to discuss the proposed Frame and the effort of Fletcher, in his capacity as governor of New York, to obtain money from Pennsylvania for New York's defense. But in general Waln appears once again

to have remained in the background. That continued to be the case when he was first elected to represent Philadelphia County in 1696, when the new Frame became law, and also in 1697 when his service was limited to a 12-man committee involved in negotiations with the Council over Fletcher's request for men or money for defense. Waln did sign, with his 16 colleagues then present, a letter to Penn on 7 November 1696 defending the new Frame which they were submitting for his approval or dissent. In March 1697 Waln and 19 other prominent Quakers, including Edward Shippen,\* Caleb Pusey, David Lloyd,\* Anthony Morris,\* William Hudson,\* John Simcock,\* Samuel Richardson,\* John Blunston,\* James Fox,\* Isaac Norris,\* and William Carter,\* wrote to Penn, again defending the new Frame while criticizing the "Old Disaffected Persons" who had held an alternative election for Philadelphia County.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>McCracken, 520; DQR, Yorks. Jordan, Philadelphia, 1:201, believes that Jane Waln (d. 1697) of "Stainemerow," who married William Birket in 1667, was Waln's mother, but more likely she was his sister and Jane Waln, "widow," who died at Newton in 1669, was his mother. This question is complicated by the fact that the clerk entered "Edward Rudd" as the father of Jane Waln of Stainemerow; the clerk probably confused daughter with mother. See DQR, Yorks.

<sup>2</sup>DQR, Yorks. shows the birth of Margaret on 3 Oct. 1677 and her death as 28 March 1676. Another Margaret was born to Waln on 12 Jan. 1683. Most likely, 1676 is a mistake for "1678."

<sup>3</sup>DQR, Yorks; Jordan, Philadelphia, 1:200-208; Hinshaw, 2:675; MMMR.

<sup>4</sup>McCracken, 517-24; MFS, 1:75; MMMR; PGM, 23:52.

<sup>5</sup>PWP, 2:656; BCDBk., 1:25, 29, 76, 109, 2:1, 55, 179-80, 229, 263, 281; CBC, 48-49, 66, 74, 110, 170, 290. 346, 372; BCTL, 1; PA, 2d ser., 19:206, 255-56, 277, 280, 292, 392-94, 424; OR. D, 80:6, 15, 88; PATbk. A, 2:651; LABk. E3, 5:6, 59, 68, 83, 234; PHDBk. E2, 5:339, E5, 7:258, E7, 9:443; MPPC, 1:26; PGM, 23:87; W&S, 3:233-34.

<sup>6</sup>MPC, 1:144; CBC, 47-178 passim; MMM, 1 Jan. 1683/4-3 May 1688 passim; BQM, 5 Nov. 1684-2 Aug. 1695 passim; PHMM, 29 July 1698-27 Jan. 1721/2 passim; PHQM, 7 Dec. 1697-4 June 1711; PHYM, 1692-1721 passim; Frost, Keithian, 106-10, 139-48; ETPEQPF, 79.

<sup>7</sup>Votes, 1 (pt. 1):43, 45-46, 49-50, 52-55.

<sup>8</sup>PWP, 3:316-18; Votes, 1 (pt. 1):60-61, 63.

<sup>9</sup>Votes, 1 (pt. 1):90, 98; PWP Micro. 7:242, 248; PWP, 3:502-6.