

A GENEALOGICAL SKETCH OF
THE POSTERITY OF
JOHN ROWLAND
of Rhosybayvil, Parish of Bayvil,
Pembroke, Wales,
and afterwards of
East Whiteland, Chester Co., Pa.

BY
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Edward K. Rowland
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of the Historical Society of Penna.

Mdcccxciii 1893

Copied by A. E. Rowland
Eagle, Mich.

Preface.

Many years ago the late Harvey Rowland of Rowlandville, Philadelphia, came across an old English prayer-book, which belonged to Ann Simonton, a relative, who obtained it from her mother, Joanna Simonton, whose maiden name was Rowland. In this book was a family record, which he copied, the accuracy of which we have verified in every important particular from various official documents found in the offices of the Recorder and Register of West Chester, in the records of several of the Friends' Meetings in Chester County, and from other like trustworthy sources. The information thus obtained goes back to the year 1716. An effort was made in Harvey Rowland's copy to fill up the gap between the year 1716 and the date of the arrival of the first of the family from the mother-country. In other words, it was assumed, without any good reason, that our branch of the Rowland family was related to John and Perscilla Rowland, of Billingshurst, Sussex, England, who came to this country, on the ship Welcome, in 1632. Later researches show this surmise to be without any foundation whatever. Nothing has yet been discovered to sustain any claim of kinship between the two families. For information prior to 1716, we must turn from the prayer-book record of Ann Simonton to other sources, the result and authority for which are given in this sketch. We would recognize in this connection, our obligation to Mr. Gilbert Cope, of West Chester whose knowledge of local history and whose skill in research are too well known to need further comment. We are indebted, also, to Mr. William M. Sullivan, of Warren Tavern, Chester County, for his courtesy in furnishing copies of the records in the old vestry-book of St. Peter's Church, East Whiteland, and to certain court officials in West Chester and elsewhere for politeness and attention. We must acknowledge, too, our indebtedness to Mrs. Hughes Jones, wife of the present vicar of St. Andrew's Church, Bayvil, Pembroke, Wales, for her kind interest in making research and inquiry for this sketch.

CHAPTER 1.

WILLIAM ROWLAND, CATHERINE HIS WIFE, THEIR SONS, THOMAS, JAMES AND JOHN

William Rowland and Catherine, his wife, were of Rhosybayvil,* parish of Bayvil, Pembroke, Wales. They are known to have had at the least three children, namely, their sons Thomas, James and John. The two younger sons, James and John, came to the Province of Pennsylvania; whether separately or together, we cannot now say. James is known to have left Wales about 1700. These two brothers both settled in Chester County, where they lived and died. James Rowland's name first appears after his arrival, as a taxable in Whiteland Township, Chester County, from 1715 to 1740. There seems to have been no tax-list preserved between the years 1696 to 1715, and none after 1740 until 1747, so we can gather no information about James Rowland and his estate during those intervals from such sources.

By deed of June 11, 1724, we learn that Isaac Norris, of Fairhill, in the county of Philadelphia, merchant, conveyed to James Rowland, of Chester County, yeoman, three hundred acres of land in

*Sometimes spelled Rhosybaifil and Rhosybaivil.

the latter county for 84. A draft of the township, made about 1732, shows this land to have been in the southeast corner of what is now East Whiteland township. James Rowland died sometime before the year 1745. His parents and his eldest brother, Thomas, had already preceeded him to their final earthly resting place, having passed away in the old country. Now, as James Rowland died intestate, leaving neither widow or children, his estate went to his heir-at-law, namely, George Rowland, the eldest son of his deceased brother Thomas, of the parish of Bayvil, Wales. Such was the ruling of the old English law of primogeniture in the case of one dying intestate, leaving no parents living, nor widow, nor living issue. All of which appears from the following records, which can still be found registered in West Chester:

By deed of January 23, 1749, George Rowland, of the parish of Bayvil, in the county of Pembroke, Wales, eldest son and heir of Thomas Rowland, late of the same place, who was eldest brother of James Rowland, late of the Province of Pennsylvania, gentleman, deceased, and Mary, wife of the said George, conveyed to Morrice Bowen, of the town of Pembroke, Esquire, for 105, the messuage, lands, etc., in Whiteland, commonly known by the name of Duffryn Mawr,**in the Province of Pennsylvania, which were of James Rowland, deceased, uncle of George Rowland. See Deed Book O, page 409, Recorder's Office, West Chester, Pa.***Immediately preceding this deed is a deposition, substantially as follows:

Thomas Oliver and Philip John, both of the Parish of Bayvil, in the county of Pembroke, yeomen, and John Mathias, of the parish of Nevern, in the same county, make oath that about fifty-two years ago they were all well acquainted with Thomas Rowland, late of Rhosybayvil, in the said parish of Bayvil, eldest son and heir of William Rowland, late of the same parish, yeoman, by Catherine, his wife, and also about the same time were well acquainted with James Rowland, youngest son of said deceased William Rowland, by the said Catherine his deceased wife, and that the said James Rowland, left the kingdom of Great Britain about fifty years ago and went over to the Province of Pennsylvania, and they understand that he is since deceased. Furthermore, they were well acquainted with George Rowland, of Rhosybayvil, yeoman, lately deceased, eldest son and heir of Thomas Rowland and nephew and heir-at-law of James Rowland; that Thomas Rowland died about the year 1739. Sworn before the mayor of Cardigan, in the presence of John Phillips, Robert Rowland, and John James, December 5, 1750.

Morice Bowen then, mentioned in the aforesaid deed, sold the land in Pennsylvania, called Duffryn Mawr, formerly owned by James Rowland, to Lewis James, the latter selling it, by deed of July 29, 1752, to Joseph Bartholomew, whose descendants now or lately owned part of it. The name of James's brother, John Rowland, first appears as a taxable in Whiteland in 1735, but owing to the general neglect in former times to record deeds, we are left in uncertainty as to his landed possessions. As we have already said, it cannot be determined whether he came to America in company with James or not. That he married and had five children we learn from his will, dated April 4, 1745, and proven April 30, 1746. See Book 2, page 198, Register's Office, West Chester.

**Duffryn Mawr, or Dyffryn Mawr, is Welsh for Great Valley.

***The writer has in his possession a letter written to him by Mr. Lily Hughes Jones, of Bayvil, Pembroke, Wales, wherein she states that the present owner of Rhosybayvil is a farmer and a violent antislavery agitator. Date of letter, March 9, 1893.

Herein he gives to this grandchildren, the surviving issue of his son James, deceased, in South Carolina, 15, to be paid to them or their lawful order if demanded within seven years; to daughter Catherine, wife of Thomas Williams, 20, within eighteen months; to daughter Anne, wife of Morris James, 20 within eighteen months; to son John Rowland, 20; to son William Rowland, 20; to wife Letitia, all goods, chattels, rights, credits, money, household stuff, and, also, all my right, title, claim, and interest in and to the Real and Personal estate of my brother James Rowland, deceased, and likewise my sole Right and title in and to one hundred acres and half acre of land Situate, Lying, and Being in the Township of Tredyffryn, with the privileges and appurtenances thereof, with the fulling-mill and utensils thereon, by virtue of a Bargain and Sale from Samuel Lily during her life, with power to dispose of the same by will to either his sons and daughters or their heirs, and appoints his wife Letitia and sons John and William executors of his will. The witnesses were Thomas Hubbert, Thomas Lloyd, and Methusalem Davis.

The inventory, made April 29, 1746, by Thomas Hubbert and Methusalem Davis, contains numerous items of stock, farming implements, and household goods. The most important entries were: Bonds, 193; a small lot four perches square, 1; one hundred and a half acres in Tredyffryn, with fulling-mill thereon, 205. No other real estate is mentioned; and it is possible and probable that he was then living on the land of his deceased brother James, and to which he evidently thought he had a claim, as the wording of his will would imply. But his interest in this land is not appraised, so it is likely that it was adjudged of no value. It appears, then, that John Rowland, of Whiteland, was the brother of James Rowland, of Whiteland, and, therefore, a son of William and Catherine Rowland, of Rhosybayvil parish of Bayvil, Pembroke, Wales. The names of William and Catherine among his children corroborate still further this statement. From the wording of the will, it is likely that he had not obtained a perfect title to the Tredyffryn property at that date; but the inventory indicates that prior to his death the transfer had been completed.

CHAPTER II

JOHN ROWLAND, OF TREDYFFRYN.

That John Rowland, of Tredyffryn, was a son of the decedent, John Rowland, of Whiteland, appears from the fact that his name is mentioned in the latter's will, and that he is on the list of taxables in Whiteland in 1747, and also from the fact that Letitia and John Rowland are also among the taxables in Tredyffryn in the same year, and also in 1750. The first assessment which has been preserved, showing the items of property, is that of 1764, in which John Rowland, of Tredyffryn, is assessed with one hundred and ten acres and buildings twenty three acres of woodland, a grist-mill, five horses, six cattle, ten sheep, one servant woman,--probably a receptioner or negro slave--and silver plate.

John Rowland, as will be shown still farther on, was, in 1744, one of the organizers of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church in East Whiteland, close by the line separating East and West Whiteland, and was also one of the incorporators of the same in 1736.

His first wife was Grace, daughter of William and Grace Paschall. She was born fourth month, 26th, 1721. She was a Friend, and, for her marriage contrary to the discipline of the Society, made an acknowledgment twelfth month, 20th, 1743. She belonged to Goshen meeting. (See records of the same.) John and Grace had one child,

Susannah, born September 18, 1743, and who is supposed to have died in infancy. The date of Grace's death has not been found.

A license was granted May, 1747, for the marriage of John Rowland and Ann Smith, but her parentage has not been discovered. There were ten children by this marriage, as is shown by the prayer-book record copied by the late Harvey Rowland Esq., of Rowlandville; also by the will of John Rowland and other trustworthy sources. The names of these children are as follows:

MARY, born May 7, 1749; married John Jones; died May 1818.

SAMUEL, born Sept. 19, 1750.

JONATHAN, born Dec. 13, 1751; married Sarah Maxwell, of Great Valley, Chester County, Pa.

WILLIAM, born May 20, 1754; died October 17, 1814.

BENJAMIN, born Aug. 2, 1756; died near Shoemakerstown, Montgomery County, Pa.

THOMAS, born Oct. 10, 1758.

JOHN, born Jan. 28, 1761; married Ruth McVaugh.

JAMES, born July 7, 1763; married Sarah Thomas.

SUSANNAH, second (the first of this name must have died), born Nov. 17, 1766; died 1819.

JOANNA, born Feb. 13, 1769; married Rev. John Simonton; died Jan. 6, 1831. She was the mother of Ann Simonton, from whom the late Harvey Rowland obtained the prayer-book record.

The will of John Rowland, of Tredyffrin, dated 1793, is found in the Register's Office, West Chester, in Book 9, page 96. In it he speaks of owning considerable property in land, also a grist-mill. (See the assessment of his property in 1764, page 11.) He gives his son Jonathan 5, whenever he shall lawfully demand it, and cancels all the latter's indebtedness to his father. To his son James he leaves, among other things, a chest and a desk. To all his other children, sums of money. He makes provision for his wife, Ann, in that she is to have a room to herself in the house, to have liberty to go all over the house, to have a "horse or a mare" for her own use, pasturage for her cow, some minor articles, and an annuity of 15. He mentions all his children by name, which names are the same as those recorded in Ann Simonton's prayer-book.

During the war of the Revolution he suffered damages from the British troops. In the report to the authorities of injuries thus inflicted upon the people of Chester County is found the following item: "John Rowland, of Tredyffrin Township, damage 95 17s. 6d."

He was, as has already been stated, one of the organizers of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church, Great Valley, Chester County, in 1744, and one of its incorporators in 1786. In the old vestry-book of this church his name appears as early as 1750, where it states

that John Rowland and Humphrey Wayne hold together Pew 14, for which John Rowland is credited with 5. Humphrey Wayne, we have been told was an uncle of the distinguished Revolutionary officer, General Anthony Wayne. In the same old vestry-book is found another entry dated 1754, which records the appointment of John Rowland as rector's warden. In the same book again he is credited with lath furnished the church, in 1789, to the amount 1 7s. 6d. This is the last time his name appears in the book. He died Feb. 8, 1793. It is uncertain whether he was buried in St. Peter's churchyard or not.

We are indebted for this information to Mr. William M. Sullivan, Warren Tavern, the present accounting Varden and custodian of the old book, also to Mr. Gilbert Cope, of West Chester, Pa.

St. Peter's Church is easily reached from Glenloch Station, Pennsylvania Railroad. Glenloch was formerly called "Steamboat," after the old tavern, upon whose sign was represented a steamboat. It is to be hoped that some of the descendants of John Rowland will unite some day in placing a suitable memorial in this church to their esteemed progenitor.

Some of John's children by his wife Ann became members of the Society of Friends by marrying into families of that faith. The following appears in the Records of Radnor Meeting:

"1789--8month, 26 day, John Rowland, son of John Rowland, of Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, married Ruth M'Vaugh, daughter of Jeremiah M'Vaugh. Witnesses: Mary, James, Thomas, Susanna, William, Joanna Rowland, and over fifty others."

At the same Meeting-House, James Rowland, son of John Rowland, of Tredyffrin, was married to Sarah Thomas, daughter of Abel and Zillah Thomas, of Tredyffrin. The date of this marriage is 11 month--19--1794.

An interesting advertisement appears in an old Philadelphia newspaper, namely, the Pennsylvania GAZETTE, of Aug. 2, 1770. It reads as follows:

"Was found on the C nestogae road, near the Middle Ferry, on Schuylkill, A Silver Watch. The owner proving property and paying charges may have it again by applying to John Rowland, in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County."

John's son James, who married Sarah Thomas, was for many years an iron merchant. His place of business was, according to old Philadelphia Directories, at 46 Arch Street, and his residence was 28 Arch Street.

In the foregoing records, then, we have found the eleven children of John Rowland, of Tredyffrin, by his two wives, Grace Pashall and Ann Smith.* We proceed to the next generation.

Jonathan Rowland, son of John Rowland and Ann Smith, his wife, married Sarah Maxwell,** of Great Valley, Chester County, Pa. Four sons were born to them, namely,--

BENJAMIN, born 1777; died Sept. 9, 1824; buried in Trinity church-yard, Oxford, Pa.

MAXWELL, born ; died ; buried in the same place.

WILLIAM, born 1780; died July 25, 1857; buried in Laurel Hill cemetery.

*Ann died May, 1814, aged 85. So stated in prayer-book record.

**Sarah Maxwell Rowland is buried near grave of her son Benjamin.

The inscription on latter's stone so records, Trinity Church, Oxford, Pa.

JONATHAN, born Oct. 5, 1782; died Sept. 13, 1854; buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Frankford, Philadelphia.

Jonathan Rowland, son of John Rowland, of Tredyffrin, was, according to my father, the late William Rowland, and my uncle the late Harvey Rowland, a soldier in the war of the American Revolution. The creditability of this trustworthy piece of family history is strengthened by the list contained in the publication of the State Library at Harrisburg, Pa., entitled "Pennsylvania in the Revolution. Associators and Militia." On page 87, Vol. II., of this work, is found the roll of the Fifth Battalion of Chester County Militia, Col. Richard Thomas commanding. It reads,--

FOURTH COMPANY

Captain, Jonathan Rowland.
1st Lieut., Samuel Davis.
2d Lieut., John Hammil.
Ensign, David Christy.

After the termination of hostilities, Jonathan Rowland went to North Carolina, where he is supposed to have died, as any further trace of his identity has not yet been discovered, unless we can except the occasion upon which the late Harvey Rowland, of Rowlandville, was approached by a lawyer of North Carolina and urged to agitate a claim for pension said to be due our ancestor. None of the family ever felt sufficient interest in the matter to investigate. Two of Jonathan's brothers (said to be Thomas and John. Evidence for John somewhat unsatisfactory) were also soldiers in the Continental army, and their names appear in "Pennsylvania Archives."

Miss Sarah Rowland, granddaughter of Capt. Jonathan Rowland and daughter of his son Jonathan, is still living. She was in all probability named after her grandmother, Sarah Maxwell.

Benjamin Rowland, oldest son of Capt. Jonathan Rowland by his wife, Sarah Maxwell, married Elizabeth Brittain, of Gwynedd, Pa., by whom he had ten children as follows:

WILLIAM, born Nov. 3, 1803; died Aug. 16, 1805

ELIZABETH, born Nov. 6, 1810; died Dec. 22, 1811.

CHARLES, born Aug. 15, 1822; died July 22, 1823. These three died in infancy. The remaining seven all reached advanced life. They were:

THOMAS, born Jan. 20, 1801.

ANNETTA, born Feb. 14, 1806.

BENJAMIN, born June 14, 1808.

WILLIAM, born Jan. 8, 1813, father of Henry J. Rowland and grandfather of Edward K. Rowland, the authors of this sketch.

HARVEY, born July 6, 1815, who copied the prayer-book record.

ELIZABETH, born Dec. 19, 1817.

SARAH, born Mar. 20, 1820.

Elizabeth Brittain, wife of Benjamin Rowland, and mother of these children, died April 20, 1859, aged eighty years, and is buried in Trinity Church-yard, Oxford, Philadelphia, Pa. Her children were all born at Cheltenham, Montgomery County, Pa.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROWLANDS OF CHELTENHAM, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA.

About the close of the last century Benjamin Rowland, who married Elizabeth Brittain, removed from Tredyffrin Township, Chester County, his native place, to Cheltenham, Montgomery County, Pa. Here his ten children were born, and here some of his grandchildren, bearing his name, are living at the present time. Benjamin's brother Maxwell also settled here. His brother William established himself in the manufacturing business in Philadelphia. Jonathan, his youngest brother, after a short residence in Cheltenham and also in Maryland, ultimately settled in Holmesburg, where his descendants are engaged in business at the present time. Benjamin Rowland's uncle Benjamin, i.e., his father's brother, also lived and died near Shoemakerstown, Montgomery County. The date of the latter's removal from Chester County has not yet been discovered. It is known to have been at the latest early in this century. For nearly a century, then, these Rowlands have been identified with the history of Montgomery County and its vicinity. Many of the tomb-stones in the old historic Trinity church-yard, Oxford, mark the last resting-places of those of them who have been gathered to their fathers. For nearly one hundred years Benjamin Rowland's family and posterity have worshiped in old "Oxford Church", and their names can be found in its parochial register, wherein are recorded their marriages, baptisms, and burials.

It is a source of regret that all vestiges of Ann Sinton's prayer-book have been lost. She married many years ago and removed to Maryland, residing near Havre de Grace, where she died. It would be next to impossible to trace it. Its accuracy, however, has been fully established by many official documents now in existence and easily accessible, all concurring in their statements. Its loss, then, is regretted more as an interesting relic than as an authentic witness to our family history.

Perhaps someday we may be able to trace our family still further back in the mother-country, a proceeding which would involve considerable labor, expense and research. Such a project, however, is now in contemplation, which, if it proves successful, would furnish a supplement to this sketch. Absolute accuracy after three or four hundred years becomes impossible, or at least more difficult, for in twenty generations in the past every individual has 1,043,575 ancestors. Genealogists allow three generations to a century. Starting, then, with two parents, four grandparents, multiplying by two at each generation, the curious and interesting result just mentioned will be reached.

CHAPTER IV.

INDIVIDUALLY BY THE NAME OF ROWLAND WHOSE IDENTITY
IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT OR IMPOSSIBLE
TO DETERMINE.

In making these researches we came across a great many persons by the name of ROWLAND that must be classified under the above head. Among these we begin with John Rowland and Thomas Rowland, of Billingshurst, Sussex, England. These two brothers purchased land from Wm. Penn, in 1681, as did also Persilla Sheppard. John Rowland married Persilla Sheppard, and all three arrived in Pa. in the ship Welcome, Captain Robert Greenway, sometime in October 1682.

They settled in Bucks County, where they took up lands in right of their purchase made in England. It was not taken up all in one place; some of it was not even located for twenty years after their arrival. This seems to have been the custom with first purchasers in this Commonwealth, and perhaps elsewhere, to invest a certain amount of money in American land before leaving the old country, and then make their selection after their arrival in the colony.

John Rowland and Persilla his wife and Thomas Rowland were entitled to lots within the city of Philadelphia, proportionate to their purchase, also to "Liberty Land" in the suburbs and to land selected by them in Bucks County.

Thomas Rowland, by deed of June 23, 1686, conveyed his city lot to James Jacob, of Philadelphia, and by deed of Dec. 9, 1686, conveyed his liberty land to Griffith Jones. John Rowland, by deed of July 9, 1690, conveyed to Gilbert Wheeler five hundred acres of unlocated land which he had inherited from his brother Thomas, deceased, as his heir. There are several deeds on record in Bucks County, from John Rowland to various persons, in some of which Persilla his wife joined. By deed of Jan 12, 1704 (O.S.), they conveyed to Wm. Buckman two hundred acres in Newtown Township, part of the five hundred acres that Persilla had purchased of Wm. Penn, Aug. 19, and 20, 1681. Their residence was then in Bristol Township, but the earlier deeds simply style them of Bucks County. In 1705 John Rowland purchased five hundred and sixty two acres in Bristol Township from the widow of Thomas Yardley. Persilla died sometime before 1711. Afterwards John Rowland took a second wife, Elizabeth, daughter of John White, deceased, of Bristol, brewer. This marriage was subsequent to March 12, 1711. Elizabeth died, without issue, prior to June 4, 1715 at which time John Rowland executed a release to her brother, George White, of all claim to the estate of her father.

The will of John Rowland is dated Dec. 3, 1716,* and proven on Mar. 3, 1715. He devised his dwelling-house at Bristol, and Boulting-house and lot, with appurtenances, "to the use of the church, forever", to be sold or otherwise disposed of by his executor, with the advise of Anthony Burton and Robert Cobbett, whom he appointed trustees on behalf of the church. To Mary, wife of Henry Tomlinson,

*This discrepancy of dates appears in our official copy of records at Doylestown. It is evidently a clerical error. It must be Mar. 3, 1716.

he gave 50, and the residue of the estate to Thomas Rodgers, Jr., his executor.

From these records it is highly probable that there are no descendants, bearing the name, from John and Thomas Rowland, of Bucks County.

The following are the names of some others:

CHARLES ROWLAND, whose name appears in the list of cattle owners in Bucks County, in 1684.

SAMUEL ROWLAND, who figures in Chester County Records, in 1687 purchased land in the town of Chester, 1689, transferred estates in Philadelphia in 1700 and 1706.

THOMAS ROWLAND, who died Mar. 17, 1690. (See Records of Middletown Meeting, Bucks County.)

THOMAS ROWLAND, who bought land from Mary Moore, in Aston Township Delaware County, in 1703, and was the first settler in the valley near the present village of Toughkenamon, Chester County, (See Futhy & Cope's History of Chester County, p. 18) Date of will 1708.

JOHN ROWLAND, who died in 1723; buried in Quaker burying-ground in Philadelphia. (See records of births and burials from 1686-1807 in Historical Society of Pennsylvania.) It is expressly stated that he was not a Quaker. His wife was buried in the same place in 1760.

SAMUEL ROWLAND and Priscilla his wife, who purchased land in New Britain Township, Bucks County, in 1729. Their Nationality is not known. His will, dated Jan. 14, 1737, mentions four children, namely, John Elinor, Margaret, and Mary.

JOHN ROWLAND, son of the above, was a graduate of the "Log College" near Hatboro. He became a Presbyterian minister. His will, dated 1745, mentions his mother Priscilla, his wife Martha, his sister Elinor, his minor children Elijah and Rachel. He had charge of a church in New Providence, Providence Township, Chester County. He styles himself of Charlestown Township, in his will. It is known that he started the erection of a church there in 1743.

WILLIAM ROWLAND, Lancaster County, lieutenant in the French and Indian War, 1747-8. See "Pennsylvania Archives," Series II., Vol. II., page 509.

DAVID ROWLAND, ensign in the same war in a regiment from Newcastle County, 1747-8; also, in 1756. See above "Archives," pages 514, 526.

JOHN ROWLAND, of Virginia, private soldier.

JAMES ROWLAND, of West Nottingham, Chester County, Pa., and wife Jean. The date of his will at West Chester is 1762.

JOSEPH ROWLAND, a vestryman in St. Peter's Church, East Whiteland Chester County, Pa., in 1744. Probably a relation of our branch.

JOSEPH ROWLAND, second lieutenant, Company II., Battalion V., Chester County Militia in 1777. Probably the son of above.

JOSEPH ROWLAND, of Williston Township, Chester County, who, with John Rowland, of Tredyffrin, suffered damage from the British troops during the Revolution. Probably a relative.

CHAPTER V.

THE NAME OF ROWLAND. A DESCRIPTION OF

PEMBROKE, WALLS.

The name of Roland, or in its anglicized form, Rowland, first appears in the eighth century, and means "Fame of the Land." The first to bear the name was Roland, a nephew and one of the peers of Charlemagne. The knightly deeds and exploits of Roland, many of which are fabulous and ridiculous, form the subject and theme of fiction during the whole age of chivalry. Ariosto based his poem of Orlando Furioso upon the life and adventures of this valiant knight, Roland and Oliver are two names frequently associated in the literature of early romance and quixotic adventure.

Among the names brought into England by the Normans at the time of the Conquest, A.D. 1066, was that of Roland or Rowland. It has come down to us both as a favorite Christian name and, also, as a surname. The various forms in which it appears in English literature are as follows: Orlando, Roland, Rowland, Rowlands, Rowlandson, Rowlet being a feminine form of Rowland, as Charlotte is of the name Charles.* It is always correctly pronounced Roland, and should never have the short o, as in odd, not, etc. The mispronunciation Rowland, often heard in New England, is a provincialism which even semi-occasional goodusage in that locality has failed to render acceptable, except to the illiterate.

This name appears frequently in English literature. Shakespeare, quoting from the fragment of an old Scottish ballad, says, "Childe Rowland to the dark tower came." Again he uses this name in "As You Like It," wherein he designates one of his characters as Sir Rowland de Bois. The name also occurs in Sir Walter Scott's Novels and in other English authors. It is found throughout Great Britain in its various forms. The Normans made their way into Wales at the time of the Conquest, which may partially account for the existence of this and many other Norman surnames in that country.

Pembroke or Pembrokeshire is one of the southwestern counties of Wales. It is a maritime district. The surface inland, toward the northeast, is mountainous, elsewhere undulating. The coast is bold and rugged, with high cliffs, and deeply indented with bays. The soil is fertile. It has great agricultural advantages, and a fine breed of black cattle are extensively exported. Its fisheries are valuable, and anthracite coal, slate and marl are plentiful. The chief towns are Haverford-West, St. Davids, Pembroke, and Tenby. The country exclusive of the borough, sends one member to the House of Commons.

* See Bardsley's "English Surnames."

The features of Pembrokeshire are described by tourists and others as extremely picturesque, and their statements in this respect are fully sustained by photographic and other views of the locality.

The Welsh historian, Thomas Nicholas, says that this shire is and has been for ages the most anglicized of all the Welsh counties. The English language ages ago supplanted the Welsh dialect. This is attributed to the fact that William the Conqueror colonized this part of Wales with many of the Flemish followers of his army, and sustained them in the possession of the property barbarously wrested from the natives by strongly-fortified garrisons, like Pembroke castle. The English language spoken today in Pembroke contains many peculiarities of expression which evince its early Norman-Flemish complexion. It is also stated that the Conqueror found his Flemish followers so turbulent that he domiciled them in this part of Wales partly to get them out of England, and out of his way, and partly to help keep in subjection the conquered Welshman, who were extremely war-like and hard to control. The successful resistance of the Saxon invasion by the Welsh is an illustration of one of the great difficulties the Norman had to encounter. Mountaineers are proverbially bold and hardy, and it is almost impossible to maintain among them forced allegiance, as Continental sovereigns have found in their futile efforts to subdue the Swiss. Pembroke was afterwards called Anglia-Transwalliana, Little England beyond Wales, by Lord Camden, on account of the many Anglican characteristics of its mixed population, such as surnames, physical traits, etc., It is almost certain that the successors of the Norman conqueror also frequently transplanted English colonists into this district, which still further tended to give to Pembroke those strongly marked English types that have attracted the attention of the historian and others. A knowledge of these facts may not be otherwise than interesting to those who trace their origin to ancestors who immigrated from this district to what was then the Province of Pennsylvania.

In this sketch of our branch of the Rowland family we have brought the annals down to the present generation. Each branch can now construct its own family tree. Blank pages have been bound up with each volume, for the purpost of recording the line of descent by those who desire to continue their genealogical history.

