

THE STORY
of
FULLWOOD
by
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FULLWOOD.

THE OLD CHAPEL -- THE STOCKS.

In the Parish Church register of Hathersage, under "Baptisms," appears the following record: -

"1650, Nov. 3---Guilielmus fil Georges Roncksley et Ellenae ux de Fullwood."

"1650, Nov. 3- -Gartruda fil; Richardi Greenwood et Elib., ux

sig Robertus Clarke, Vicarius Guardiane, Thomas Heaton, Guilielmus Bagshaw."

George and Ellen Roncksley evidently went to Hathersage in company with Richard and Elizabeth Greenwood, who had their daughter Gertrude baptised at the same time and place. This may appear strange to-day, but it was not uncommon in the 17th century. 'rile isolated district of Fullwood was some distance from Sheffield, and the constant reference to "Fullwood" in the Parish Register of Hathersage is an indication of the close connection by marriages and baptisms of the remote village of Hathersage with Fullwood inhabitants. Fullwood was in the extreme westerly corner of the parish of Sheffield. 'The Chapel of Ease at Ecclesall (now Ecclesall Church) was the nearest place for these two couples to have taken their offsprings for baptism, but probably the old building was closed. There is uncertainty as to the Ecclesall curate-in-charge from 1635 to 1656. When this William Roncksley was twelve years of age in 1662, Charles II. passed an Act that all clergymen should declare their "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything in the Book of Common Prayer. "On young Roncksley this would produce an impression which left its mark in his future career. It had a personal application, because apart from the clergy and curates of the Church, it applied to "schoolmasters" keeping public or private schools. To the King and Church party this Act was welcomed as a crowning mercy, but the Church suffered, and the Act sowed the seeds of Nonconformity. When William Roncksley was 15 years of age the Five Mile Act was passed. Five persons meeting for worship constituted a Conventicle; if over that number, the penalty was three months' imprisonment for the first offence, six months for the second offence, and the third offence "banishment from the country for seven years, and in case they return suffer death without benefit of clergy." These measures had a life-lasting effect upon William Roncksley, and his sympathies were noted in his later years. At this period occurred the Plague of Eyam. The

Fullwood Constable in his accounts to the Lord of the Manor"1666 charges about people from Fullwood at time sickness was at Eyam." Sheffield Register contains the following, "This tyme did the plage greatly rage at Eyam and the constables rote watch to keep the peste from the towne."



CHAPEL

From Fullwood and the villages of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lincolnshire the dissenters resorted at fixed times to a spot near Stanage Pole, called the" Lord's Seat"—a name applied to a farm in the district' to-day. For a number of years they worshipped in this bleak moorland spot between Stanage Pole and Stanage Rocks, and no doubt William Roncksley would be a frequent visitor to these meetings. He was a schoolmaster" at one period of his life. He was educated at the Sheffield Grammar School. He would come under these severe laws. He never married, and died January 4th, 1724. In his latter days he was clerk to William Jessop, of Broomhall, and appointed "his friend and benefactor" his executor for the fulfilment of his will, by which he left £100 for the establishment of a school at Crookes, a school at Fullwood, and endowed a chapel with £400 for the use of Protestant Dissenters at Fullwood. This money was lost by the failure of Shore's Bank in early in the nineteenth century.

Fullwood at this period, 1724, was remote from Sheffield. Its approach is described by West Bank Lane (a narrow lane behind the Co-operative Wholesale Stores in West Street), then by fields, or, along Broad Lane, by Gibbet Hill (now Western Bank) to Hallam Gate Road, now Whitham Road. The corner of Northumberland Road was known as Race Nook Corner. The road went across the "Crookesmoors" (enclosed in 1787, the inclusion of which occasioned serious riots, because the populace of Sheffield objected to having their racecourse taken away. Sheffield races were held there), across the moors to Rand Moor (on the edge of the moors), then by Jenkin Lane (now



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Hangingwater Road), mounting the hill to the Nether Green, up to Willow Lane, Goole Green, down the hill where the church at present stands, to Brookhouse Green, then into Fullwood by the only thoroughfare for vehicles, known to-day as Whiteley Lane. This was Birks Green in 1795.

It was on "Birks Green" the original "stocks" stood, these have been renovated. Fullwood may boast of the only township in Sheffield which has preserved these specimens of the 17th century methods of punishment. They are placed in the chapel yard, which was the only place of interment in Fullwood for 100 years before the erection of the present Christ Church. During the recent alterations remains were found in the old Chapel. Yard. Christ Church was originally, like Eccesall Church, a Chapel of Ease to the Parish. Church.

William Roncksley, the benefactor of Fullwood, when as a lad of sixteen would have seen these stocks in use, and probably witnessed some refractory or drunken person incarcerated between these two posts.

The building of a chapel at Fullwood would be of immense value to the scattered residents of this old-time hamlet. It was always in advance of Hallam, which separated it from Sheffield. In 1451

Fullwood had 20 assessments, Hallam only 7. The northerly part of Fullwood, which embraces the old Roman Road to Derby-shire (Redmires Road) was known as the "Long Causeway." The executor of Roncksley's will, Judge William Jessop, of Broomhall, faithfully carried out his trust, and placed the buildings and fund under the control of the congregation worshipping- at Upper Chapel, the chief 'Dissenting building- in the town, in whose hands the old Chapel at present remains. At present it is rented to the Congregational Union in Sheffield for worshipping purposes. The Manse adjoining the old chapel was erected by subscription a few years later; 1754, and was for many years the residence of the pastor.

A licence under the "Act of Toleration" was granted to John Fox, of Fullwood Hall, and was granted under the will of William Roncksley, dated October, 1723. It has been suggested that John Fox was

a Dissenter. We have no evidence of this. The frequenters of the "Lord's Seat" at Stanage probably met at his house. This, one of the oldest chapels in the parish of Sheffield, has had a chequered career. The Rev. Jeremiah Gill was the first appointed minister and is buried in the chapel; ministers from Upper Chapel officiating, also laymen including T. Asline Ward, a candidate for Parliament in Sheffield following the 1832 Reform Bill; ministers : Jeremiah Gill, 1728-1758; supplies from Upper Chapel, 1758-1798; James Ramsbottom, 1798-1802; William Whitelegge, 1803-1811 (during Whitelegge's ministry the endowment was 'lost') ; Gilbert William Echott, 1811-; supplies, 1817-1819; John Macdonald, 1819-1827; occasional services, 1873-1896; supplies, 1896; also Hugh Carsick Rhodes¹, who laboured here from 1827 to 1873, who, with his wife, are also buried in the chapel. Two or three other prominent Dissenters lie buried within its portals, including

Roncksley himself and a daughter of Samuel Plimsoll, of Whiteley Wood Hall, the Sailors' Friend. The old ivy-covered building still stands in what is known now as Whiteley Lane, a permanent memorial to the early Nonconformists, whose principles and teachings have done so much in the religious world. It is not generally known that it was in Fulwood where "Taylor," the itinerant preacher, made his first appearance at the house of a Mr. Wardlow, the forerunner of that Methodism which is to-day and after its union will be the largest body of Protestant Christians in the world. The school founded by John Fox of Fulwood and William Roncksley and Mary Roncksley in 1719 and 1723 respectively had provided £215 for the free education of 18 poor children from Fulwood and Hallam. The old school is still in existence in School Green Lane, recently whitewashed covering up the interesting tablet recording the names of the donors, it was also called the "Charity house" perhaps from the fact that the trustees considered money payments preferable to rewards in shape of Books. The amounts varied from 2s. 6d. to 15s. and were taken round and distributed to the children in the presence of their parents. In 1895, 150 children received these prizes



CHURCH

One of the most prominent clergymen in Sheffield was Canon Sutton of Greystones, Vicar of Sheffield in the early part of the 19th century. After his successful efforts for the erection of four churches in the town by Parliament, he turned his attention to Hallam. There was no Church of the Establishment though the Methodists had their meeting houses in Fulwood and Crookes. By soliciting the benevolent sympathy of Miss Silcock of Whiteley Wood Hall and Miss Harrison of Weston Park, these ladies nobly erected two churches in this district, Fulwood and Crookes churches in the Township of Hallam. The Fullwood churchgoers, tradition says, met at the old Farm behind the Guildhall called Goole Green Farm, where Methodism first saw light in the District. The



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