

Notes from London Meeting (Devonshire House + Southwark)
on Francis and Anna Maria Cotton

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Notes of COTTON Hobart, Tasmania

family of "Kelvedan"

Swansea.

(see.)

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Notes on Francis and Anna Maria Cotton.
of Kelvedon, near Swansea.

COTTON, Anna Maria (1800-1883) born Tilney.

Anna Maria Tilney, daughter of John Shelton and Susanna Tilney of Moulsham, Chelmsford, Essex, was born there on 21 March 1800. The family subsequently moved to London.

John Shelton Tilney was disowned by Devonshire House Monthly Meeting on 5 October 1819. Susanna Tilney was disowned by the M.M. on 7 December 1819. Each of the parties separately appealed to the Quarterly Meeting and, its Committee on Appeals having confirmed the M.M.'s decision, had asked that their cases be heard in the Quarterly Meeting at large. London and Middlesex Q.M. on 28 January 1820, and the same Meeting on 28 April 1820 dismissed the appeals of John Shelton and Susannah Tilney respectively.

REFERENCES AND NOTES.

Essex Q.M. Births Digest: A.M.T.'s father described as shopkeeper. Devon^{shire} House M.M. minutes vol 16 p 32: the M.M. committee had reported on 7 September 1819 that John Shelton Tilney's 'conduct in the neighbourhood where he resides has been very disorderly, and that he has united in some disreputable quarrels in the public streets'. (Devonshire House M.M. minutes vol 16 p 29).

Of Susannah Tilney: Devonshire House M.M. minutes vol 16 p 40: the testimony is given on the grounds of her 'having fallen into the practice of openly quarrelling and abusing several of her neighbours much to the reproach of her profession.' After the draft testimony was read in M.M. 'Thomas Cotton then requested that a written paper from Susannah Tilney and some others on her behalf should also be read, which was granted' but the meeting proceeded to disownment nevertheless. Q.M. minutes quoted in Devonshire House M.M. minutes vol 16 pp 46-7, 56-7.

Note: Susannah Tilney insisted on her appeal being heard at the Yearly Meeting, and this so incensed the Devonshire House M.M. that they took up the matter of Right of Appeal and the rules were cancelled. Thus

the Tilney family caused much annoyance and trouble to Devonshire House Meeting and this may account for their strictness in regard to Anna Maria's request for reinstatement.

ANNA MARIA TILNEY/COTTON. Date of birth, 21.3.1800.

Her father came from country and lived in district of Devonshire House but ~~Susannah~~ she applied (with Susannah) for membership of Devonshire House M.M., yet she resided in Southwark Parish. This might mean that she was living alone or at least away from home at 1820 and could mean she was 'a naughty girl' with a reputation - this seems to be the case from the wording of ~~the~~ the minute.

Friends' House: original M.M. minutes Devonshire House M.M. minutes 5.12.1820. p.81, item 4.

Request to join. "Anna Maria and Susannah Tilney residing within the compass of Southwark Monthly Meeting, Jeremiah Jesup Candles and William Mawley to make enquiry."

M.M. 6.2.1821 p.90, item 10.

'The recommendation of H(sic)annah Maria Tilney is discontinued.'

M.M. (Devonshire House) 8.5.1821

"The Friends appointed to visit Hannah (sic) Maria Tilney brought in the following report.

"To the M.M.

Agreeably to our appointment we have many times visited Hannah (sic) Maria Cotton, late Tilney, upon the occasion of her being married by a priest to a member of our Society. We have to report that previously to her marriage, her conduct has been very reproachful, upon which subject as well as the circumstance of her being married in a manner contrary to the rules of our Society, we have endeavoured to bestow considerable labour in order to bring her mind to a just sense of her misconduct, and are enabled to inform the meeting that she was brought to an acknowledgement of her error and we believe is truly penitent and sorry for her transgression.

Sammuel Darton

William Hargrave. 7.5.1821."

Devonshire House M.M.: 5.6.1821. "On considering the report of Friends appointed to visit Anna Maria Cotton, this Meeting has again been painfully affected with the information on reproachful conduct in her case, which did not appear when the appointment was first made to visit her, and considering that such conduct will require the fullest condemnation and proof of sincere repentance, desires the said Friends to visit her again on the whole case and make report to a future meeting.

Devonshire House M. . minutes, 3.7.1821. p.114, item 13.

"The Friends appointed report they have again visited Anna Maria Cotton late Tilney. The case is continued under their care,"

Devonshire House M.M. minutes. 9.10.1821. p.132, item 23.

"The Friends appointed brought in the draft of a testimony of disownment against Anna Maria Cotton, late Tilney, which was read, and with some alteration approved and is as follows: "Anna Maria Cotton, late Tilney, a member of this meeting having through unwatchfulness fallen into very reproachful conduct and further deviating from our religious principles in being married by a priest to a young man filling the station of an apprentice - was several times visited thereupon by appointment of this Meeting without producing the desired satisfaction. We therefore think it right to testify against such disgraceful conduct and violation of our religious principles, and do hereby disown the said Anna Maria Cotton as a member of our Religious Society - desiring nevertheless she may be brought to feel condemnation and sincere repentance for her outgoings and by orderly walking, become suitable for reinstatement with us."

FRANCIS COTTON. From the original minute books of the Society of Friends in Southwark. M.M. 16.1.1821. P.261. Item 14.

"It being reported to this Meeting that Francis Cotton has been married by priest to a member of another Meeting, Richard Fell and Joseph Clarke are appointed to visit him thereon and report."

M.M. 20.2.1821. P.264, item 14. "The Friends appointed in the case of Francis Cotton brought in the following report. "To Southwark M.M., Agreeably to our appointment, we have visited Francis Cotton who acknowledges his having been married by a priest to a member of our Society

belonging to another Meeting: when he informed us he was fully aware at the time of the breach of our rules, but considered he could not have been married otherwise for a considerable time, which induced him to take the step he did. We did not discover in him any disposition to condemn the line of conduct he had pursued, further than he should regret to lose his right of membership. Richard Fell, Joseph Clarke." Which having obtained the consideration of this meeting, it directs Friends before on the appointment ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ to prepare a Testimony of Disownment against him."

"Records of the M.M. of the People called Quakers in Southwark testifying against Disorderly Persons and of Certificates given and received. 1806-1854.

Southwark M.M. held by adjournment of 3rd month, 1821.

"Francis Cotton, a member of ours, having been reported to be married by a priest to a member of another M.M., was visited thereon privately and by appointment, when he acknowledged the fact, but declined to say where the marriage took place; although he expressed some regret that circumstances had induced him to violate the rules of our Society, yet he did not evince a disposition to condemn such a deviation from our principles to the satisfaction of this Meeting. We therefore after due consideration disown the said Francis Cotton as a member of our Society, nevertheless desire that he be favoured to feel the importance of our religious testimonies, and by a circumspect and consistent conduct therewith, become fit to be reinstated in membership with us."

Southwark M.M. 12.8.1834 P.321, item 6.

"A letter was received from Francis Cotton, now resident at Kelvedon, Great Swanport, Van Diemen's Land, requesting to be reinstated in membership; and another letter from James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, who are engaged in religious service in that country was annexed to the application: this Meeting proposed to take the same into consideration at a future Meeting."

Southwark M.M. 16.9.1834. P.327, item 8.

On considering the application of Francis Cotton for re-instatement into membership, together with the letter respecting him transmitted by the Friends on religious service in Van Diemen's Land as stated in our minute of last month, this Meeting accedes to the application and he is

re-instated in membership accordingly. The Clerk is desired to write with Joseph ~~xxx~~ Shewell in communicating to Francis Cotton the conclusion of this Meeting."

M.M. 16.12.1834. P.342, "Report of two copies of a statement of minute informing Francis Cotton of his reinstatement in membership were sent by the Wave and the Sarah two months previously."

Southwark M.M. 16.9.1834 PP. 327-329.

Text of letters from F.Cotton and Backhouse and Walker written into minutes:

Kelvedon,

Great Swanport, V.D.L.

2nd Month, 15th, 1834

To Southwark Monthly Meeting of Friends,

Dear Friends, Having long deplored these deviations which led to my disownment as a member of the Society of Friends whose principles I have been led to uphold from a deep conviction of their accordance with great truths of the Gospel, I feel earnestly desirous of being reinstated in membership and though far separated from my friends, I trust I shall not the less obtain their sympathy in thus seeking a reunion with them. I remain with love, Your Friend, Francis Cotton.

Same address as above,

15th, 2nd Month, 1834.

To Southwark M.M. of Friends,

Dear Friends, Having had the opportunity of observing the growing exercise of Francis Cotton's mind in the things that pertain to salvation, during two visits of some length to the Port of V.D.L. in which he resides, at intervals of nearly a year, and during which we were sojourners in his family: we think it right to inform you that he has not only given up faithfully to support the testimonies to the simplicity and spirituality of the Gospel which Friends believe themselves called upon to bear, but also to advocate them in public as a minister in which service he has been exercised both in his own family and neighbourhood and when accompanying us on our journey in this land, greatly to our comfort, and that he unites with his wife, who has applied for reinstatement into membership to Devonshire House Monthly Meeting in endeavouring to train up their children and to order their family

consistently with the principles of Friends. ~~And having conferred with him regarding these deviations which occasioned his separation from the Society and believing his sorrow for them to be sincere, we have thought it right to state our opinion that his request to be re-instated into membership may be safely granted."~~

N.B. Should the request of F. Cotton be granted it will be desirable that a notification of membership should be transmitted to him, to be produced to the little company associated as a M.M. of Friends at Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land."

According to the typewritten Biography of F. Cotton in Friends' House, Certificate of Removal was forwarded in 1861, to Hobart.

Friends' House, London. From original minute books of Devonshire House
M.M. 4.11.1834. p.180, item 18.

"Application having been made by letter from Anna Maria Cotton, for re-instatement into membership with us, the subject is left for further consideration at another meeting."

M.M. 6.1.1835. p.187, item 16. "This Meeting has again seriously considered in conjunction with a committee appointed by the Quarterly Meeting the application for re-instatement into membership of Anna Maria Cotton, now resident in Van Diemen's Land: and whilst it rejoices in the report of the state of her mind as conveyed in a letter on the subject from our Friends James Backhouse and George Washington Walker, and feels sympathy with her in her present situation, and desires her encouragement in the path of duty; yet, considering that Anna Maria Cotton is resident at so great a distance from us and where no recognized Meeting of our Society exists which can exercise a right care and oversight over its members, this Meeting does not see its way clear to comply with her request. The Clerk is requested to forward a copy of this minute to Anna Maria Cotton."

M.M. 3.2.1835. p.190, item 8. The Clerk reports that a copy of our minute of last month on the application of Anna Maria Cotton was forwarded to her by post, on the 29th ult. addressed to her at Kelvedon, Great Swanport, V.D.L.. The Clerk is asked to forward a duplicate copy of the said minute and report."

M.M. 3.3.1835. p.193, item 13. "The Clerk reports that a duplicate

^copy of our minute respecting Anna Maria Cotton's application was forwarded to her by the Westmorland on the 28th ult."

Devonshire House M.M. minutes. 9.8.1853 p.529, item 14.

"This Meeting being informed that Francis Cotton of Kelvedon in Van Diemen's Land has in a letter addressed to our Friend Joseph Neatby expressed his earnest desire that his wife Anna Maria Cotton may be restored to membership in our Society by this M.M., although it did not see its way to comply with her application for re-instatement in the year 1834; we appointed the following Friends to consider the present application and report, viz. Cornelius Hanbury, John Thomas Barry, and Charles Gilpin."

D.H.M.M. 6.9.1853. "The Friends appointed on the application made on behalf of Anna Maria Cotton ~~of Kelvedon~~ for her re-instatement in membership with us brought in the following report; viz: "To Devonshire House M.M., in accordance with our appointment we have taken the case of our Friend Anna Maria Cotton of Kelvedon, Van Diemen's Land into our serious consideration. It appears she was disunited from membership by our M.M. in the year 1821 having been married in manner contrary to the rules of our Society - her husband was on the same grounds disowned by Southwark M.M. In 1834 application for re-instatement in membership was received by Southwark M.M. from Francis Cotton which after due consideration was acceded to, and he was reinstated accordingly. An application was at the same time made by Anna Maria Cotton to our M.M. which after being upon the books from 4th Month 1834 to 6th Month 1835 was refused on the ground of her residence at so great a distance from us, and where no recognized Meeting of our Society exists, which can exercise a right care and oversight over its members. Since that time Francis Cotton has become an approved minister among these professing with Friends in that distant colony, and the concurrent testimony of Friends who have visited Van Diemen's Land from this country, assures us of the consistent walk and conversation both of himself; ^{and his wife} that they are occupying a most useful position in the colony and are kindly interested for such of our members as in the altered circumstances of the present day find their way to that distant part of the world. ~~Taking into consideration~~

Taking into consideration all the circumstances of this peculiar case we are of opinion that Anna Maria Cotton has a very strong^{call} on the sympathy of our M.M., and that a decision to re-instate her in membership would be a strength and comfort to herself and to her family.

John T. Barry

Charles Gilpin."

"We are authorised to state that our Friend Cornelius Hanbury concurs in the foregoing report but being absent from London he has not appended his signature. C.G."

This Meeting concludes to reinstate our Friend Anna Maria Cotton in membership in our Society and she is hereby re-instated accordingly, of which the Clerk is required to inform her,"

Note: Mr. Milligan^x said Devonshire House could be considered a harsh M.M. - perhaps harsher than most, and this could account for their not re-admitting Anna Maria earlier.

Edward Milligan, Francis's House, had a as at March 1974.
(Edward Milligan) E/