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978-1-108-01611-7 — The Journal of George Fox: A Revised Edition
George Fox, Edited by John L. Nickalls
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The Journal of George Fox

A Revised Edition

EDITED BY JOHN L. NICKALLS



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THE JOURNAL OF GEORGE FOX

THE JOURNAL OF
GEORGE FOX

A REVISED EDITION BY
JOHN L. NICKALLS

WITH AN EPILOGUE BY
HENRY J. CADBURY
AND
AN INTRODUCTION BY
GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL



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P R E F A C E

BY THE EDITOR

THIS new edition of George Fox's Journal is designed to replace for the general reader the text prepared by Thomas Ellwood, which was first published in 1694 and has been many times reprinted without substantial alterations, in England until 1902, and in America until 1892.

These editions are listed in an appendix to the 1902 issue of the eighth (Bicentenary) edition published in London.

The following brief particulars of some of the principal MSS. still extant, and of Ellwood's edition, will help to explain the differences between the present edition and those which have gone before it.

George Fox, through most of his life, did not keep a journal in the ordinary sense of a nearly contemporary day-to-day record. It was also Fox's habit to dictate, in preference to writing himself, if there was an amanuensis at hand.

In 1675, or possibly beginning in 1674, Fox dictated to Thomas Lower, his stepson-in-law, an autobiography down to the year of writing. This is now called the *Spence MS.* Interspersed through the narrative, and now bound with it, are numerous letters, pastoral epistles, and other papers. After the end of the autobiography are a number of notes on early Quaker history, and various testamentary instructions. The *Spence MS.* has been published *verbatim* and *literatim* under the title *The Journal of George Fox*, by Cambridge University Press, 1911, 2 volumes, with an introduction by T. Edmund Harvey and full editorial notes by Norman Penney. It is referred to as the *Cambridge Journal*. This MS. was at one time thought to be the one

called by Fox the *Great Journal*; but Henry J. Cadbury, in his *Annual Catalogue of George Fox's Papers* (1939), has shown that the *Great Journal* was another rather similar MS., now lost.

The following MSS. are of more limited scope, but valuably supplement the *Spence MS.*

When in prison at Lancaster in 1664, Fox wrote or dictated detailed accounts of a number of experiences at various times between 1647 and the time of writing. They are chiefly 'sufferings for preaching the truth'. The MS. preserved is either the original dictated by Fox, or a contemporary copy. This MS., known as *The Short Journal*, has been published *verbatim* and *literatim* under that title by Cambridge University Press, 1925, with an introduction by T. Edmund Harvey and full editorial notes by Norman Penney. It is referred to as the *Short Journal*.

It is not strictly a journal, nor is it continuous enough to be called an autobiography. But its reporting is ten years nearer in time to the events described than is the *Spence MS.*; and it contains many vivid touches omitted from the later account. Presumably Fox used it to help his recollection when he was dictating his autobiography. The *Cambridge* and the *Short Journals*, reproducing the MSS. exactly, and with their valuable introductions and full notes, remain of the first importance for the fullest study of Fox.

There are several seventeenth-century copies of the Journal of Fox's Irish travels. One is included in the *Spence MS.* and printed in *Camb. Jnl.* It was not, like the rest of the autobiography, dictated in 1675, but is a running account written during Fox's journey in Ireland in 1669. It opens with a passage by one of Fox's companions, referring to Fox in the third person, but most of it is by Fox himself, probably dictated to the same companion. Other copies are in *Epistles and Queries* (George Fox's Papers Xx), *G.F.'s Epistles* (George Fox's Papers Z), and in *Ecroyd MS.* (see *J.F.H.S.*, xiv, 81 ff.).

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In the *Spence MS.* the journeys to, in, and from America and the West Indies are left by the autobiographer to be covered by then existing diaries and letters, some of which are no longer extant. For the voyage from England to Barbados we depend upon the detailed log of a fellow-passenger, John Hull. A seventeenth-century MS. copy of this is in *Epistles and Queries*, mentioned just above, and is printed in *Camb. Jnl.* For the sojourn in Barbados we depend upon letters by Fox and others.

The journeys from Barbados onwards until arrival home in England were recorded almost from day to day. Out of this period of a year and a half, about a year was spent in strenuous and hazardous travel on the American mainland. For eleven months of this we have the original diaries.

Of all the MSS. about Fox's life, these *American Diaries* are, I believe, those most truly to be described as a journal by George Fox. The little home-made pocket notebooks, written beside camp-fires and in the log-cabins of pioneers in the wilderness, are perhaps the only MSS., dictated as diaries from day to day by Fox himself, of which the originals survive. The substance of their story, except for the first seven weeks, is to be found in the *Spence MS.* and is printed in *Camb. Jnl.* The two original diaries are preserved among the MS. records of Friends at Bristol. They have been used in the present edition and are here given in full. For further details, see editorial paragraphs on pp. 608-9, 639, 655. Other seventeenth-century MS. copies of the *American Diaries* are in the Bodleian Library, in a handwriting thought to be that of Thomas Ellwood, and in the *Ecroyd MS.* See Bibliography, p. xvi f. post, for ownership of the various MSS.

Thomas Ellwood worked on the instructions of the Second-day Morning Meeting, a committee of the Society of Friends in London, and in accord with the desire of Fox that his life and writings should be published. The *Journal* which Ellwood prepared was a composite work, presenting a continuous account of

Fox's life in the form of an autobiography, in a more uniform, more polished, and more cautious style in many places than the various MSS. which have been mentioned. Some passages he considerably abbreviated. Ellwood worked with more freedom than would to-day be approved, putting passages into autobiographical form from other sources, but he was an able and a careful editor. He also adapted or omitted many of Fox's own vigorous phrases, his picturesque details, his apparent overvaluation of praise, claims to psychic powers, and matter thought liable to cause political or theological protest, besides doubtful or unverifiable statements.¹ Moreover, after the end of the true autobiography, he compiled an autobiographical narrative for the last fifteen years of Fox's life. It is based upon information in diaries kept for, but not by, Fox; and it is heavily loaded with pastoral and doctrinal papers and letters. Three of these diaries are printed in the same volume as the *Short Journal* described above.

The different character and quality of the later sources mark off Ellwood's narrative of the last years, from Fox's own work, and it has not been included here. The present text ends with the end of the autobiographical portion of the *Spence MS.*, in 1675; and the last fifteen years of Fox's life are covered by a chapter written for this volume by Henry J. Cadbury.

As to the narrative, the present edition is as complete as Ellwood's within the same period. And it expresses the story in Fox's own words in preference to Ellwood's more polished presentation of it. In a few cases I have adopted Ellwood's account of an incident as clearer than that available in the MS.

¹ Fox's report of Justice Clarke's words about Ellen Fretwell's being an instrument of the Devil, and of the judgment upon him, was objected to. An amended leaf (pp. 309-10) was circulated to purchasers of the 1694 edition, omitting the justice's name, his remarks about Ellen Fretwell, as well as the sentences referred to in my footnote on p. 509 post. Few purchasers seem to have substituted the altered leaf. The omissions were maintained in subsequent editions.

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The main source has been the *Spence MS.* as printed in the *Cambridge Journal*. Matter supplementing the MS., taken from Ellwood's edition, has been enclosed within angular brackets, < >, without reference to its position in the source, to which the year and the context are sufficient guide. The most important passage from Ellwood to be used is that which opens the book, and which, except for short interpolations, provides the narrative down to 1650, near the foot of p. 49 of the present edition. This long passage from Ellwood is necessary because no MS. source survives for most of it; the first sixteen pages of the *Spence MS.* are lacking. *Short Journal* has provided down to 1664 many vivid details and some whole incidents. These passages occasionally replace an inferior account in *Camb. Jnl.* Passages from *S.J.* are marked at the beginning and end with footnote references. Where such a footnote begins with 'Cf.' the passage indicated contains a number of borrowings from *S.J.*, which are not individually marked.

A few sources other than *Cambridge Journal*, Ellwood, and *Short Journal* have been drawn upon. These additional sources are identified either by footnotes or by editorial paragraphs placed within square brackets []. The most notable instances are the *American Diaries* and a number of letters from Fox to his wife which have not been printed in previous editions of the Journal.

Not all the controversial or pastoral papers and similar documents inserted in the Ellwood editions have been used; in so far as they have a biographical interest they have been retained. Doctrinal papers have been abbreviated to give the most essential points, unless their importance seemed to warrant printing the whole. Many papers of protest and remonstrance have been omitted. In each case a footnote directs to where the full text can be found in the first edition, 1694, and in the eighth (Bicentenary) edition. The year and the context provide an easy guide to finding them in any full edition. If some other text of a document has been used instead of the text in Ellwood's edition, the reference to the source used has been placed first.

Inserted documents not of a narrative kind, and several passages of discourse have been printed in smaller type.

The pagination of the 1694 edition contains several irregularities, requiring partial description here to clarify the footnote references to that edition. About 90 page-numbers were used twice. At the first use, from p. 201 onwards, they carry an asterisk. Where (2) is added to the page-number in my footnotes, the reference is to the page-number occurring a second time, and without *. These follow the first use, in a second series, and the pagination is thereafter regular.

Documents in *Cambridge Journal* not previously printed have not been used again here unless they seemed to me to contribute substantially to the narrative.

Where Ellwood's narrative was built up from matter taken out of letters in the *Spence MS.*, the letters themselves or parts of them have as a rule been printed in preference to Ellwood's compilation from them. William Penn's fine estimate of Fox's character, written for the first edition, again prefaces the *Journal*.

In transcribing the text for the present edition the punctuation and spelling, including personal names, have been modernized, and many capital letters occurring in the sources have been dispensed with. Simple grammatical errors, which often occur, such as the use of singular verb after plural subject, have been corrected. Some slight obscurities due to faulty construction have been left. The forms of place-names have been modernized, usually in the text if the change is slight, by footnote if it is considerable.

Obsolete words and obsolete meanings have been explained in footnotes, in more cases than some readers will think necessary. A number of archaic forms and usages have been retained as showing how Fox spoke, since nearly all the narrative was dictated by him. He often used *after* where we should say *afterwards*; this has usually been made clearer by the use of a comma. He often said *I riz* (sometimes written *risse*), but here uniformly printed *riz*, meaning 'I rose'; and *run* for *ran* will also be found. *Naked*,

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meaning unarmed, is a reminder of how recently in Fox's time arms naturally included armour.

Readers who are puzzled by the system of dating used, may find the following explanation useful.

Dates which appear in the sources are given in the form in which they occur, viz. the Old Style or Julian calendar in use in seventeenth-century England. Their modern equivalents in our New Style or Gregorian calendar adopted in 1752, are added in [] immediately after each date. The apparent discrepancy is greater than might be expected in those documents which were dated in the Quaker manner, i.e. by the number of the month instead of the name, as explained below. Dates added editorially are in modern style only.

By the Julian calendar which continued in use in England until the end of 1751, the year began with 25th March. Documents dated from 1st January to 24th March, therefore, may easily be misread by a year. The Gregorian calendar, beginning the year with 1st January, had been in use in the rest of western Europe since 1582. Many people, therefore, in writing dates in January, February and March, gave also the New Style year as well, as e.g. 1st February, 1660/1; the second year gives us the historical date.

Quaker dating introduces a further complication. The Society of Friends from its beginning called the months by numbers, refusing to use their 'heathen' names. Until 1752, therefore, First Month means March, and Twelfth Month February. But in accord with the Old Style calendar the first 24 days of First Month, March, were in the old year, and as a rule were dated so, though in a few instances the whole of First Month was dated with the new year. With the adoption of the New Style calendar in 1752 the Quaker numbering of months was revised and January (instead of March) became First Month. By way of example, the following table expresses the months from December, 1689, until March, 1691, according to the various styles.

DECEMBER, 1689, TO MARCH, 1691, EXPRESSED
 ACCORDING TO OLD STYLE AND NEW STYLE

OLD STYLE		NEW STYLE			
<i>Months by Numbers</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Months by Names</i> (Historical Dating)	<i>Years</i>	<i>Months by Numbers</i>	
Tenth	1689	December	1689	Twelfth	
Eleventh		January	1690	First	
Twelfth		February		Second	
First 1-24	1689	March 1-24	}	Third	
First 25-31	1690	March 25-31		Third	
Second		April		Fourth	
Third		May		Fifth	
Fourth		June		Sixth	
Fifth		July		Seventh	
Sixth		August		Eighth	
Seventh		September		Ninth	
Eighth		October		Tenth	
Ninth		November		Eleventh	
Tenth		December		1690	Twelfth
Eleventh		January		1691	First
Twelfth		February		Second	
First 1-24	1690	March 1-24	}	Third	
First 25-31	1691	March 25-31		Third	

In preparing the text, the unfinished draft for a new edition which Norman Penney left at his death has been invaluable to me; and I have used it extensively, and also many of his footnotes identifying persons who were not followers of Fox.

To more helpers than I can here name I should like to accord my grateful thanks, but especially to the following:

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Henry J. Cadbury and Geoffrey F. Nuttall have read my MS.; T. Edmund Harvey has read some portions of it; and all three have given valuable advice and help, resulting in improvement of the text and notes. Henry J. Cadbury has also kindly contributed the chapter on George Fox's later years, and Geoffrey F. Nuttall the Introduction. Nina Saxon Snell has been so good as to undertake the index; and my wife has given me valuable help with proof reading.

I should also like to thank Isabel Grubb for information respecting places mentioned in Fox's Irish travels, Russell Mortimer for details about seventeenth-century Bristol, George Dott of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society for help over some obscure Scottish place names, and G. P. B. Naish of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, for guidance as to the probable tonnages of the two ships in which Fox crossed the Atlantic ocean in 1671 and 1673; in the absence of actual record it can be no more than a well-based guess. To Muriel Hicks, assistant librarian at Friends House, I am deeply indebted for her carrying so large a share of the regular work of the library for several years past, as well as for occasional consultation of sources.

Thanks are also tendered to the following who have very kindly allowed the MSS. belonging to them to be used in preparing the present edition: Bristol Friends for the original MS. diaries of Fox's American travels; Brindley Martin for a seventeenth-century copy of the same diaries; L. Violet Holdsworth for the letter from George Fox to Margaret Fox, printed on p. 686, which was a gift to her father, Dr. Thomas Hodgkin; and to the University Press, Cambridge, for kindly allowing me to use the printed text of the MSS. as they appear in the *Cambridge Journal* and the *Short Journal*. If there is any other material used for which permission should have been asked, the omission is unwitting and my apologies are offered to the owners of it.

This edition has been undertaken on the initiative of the Library Committee of the Society of Friends in London.

Its preparation and its publication at a price which makes it available to a wide circle, have been made possible by support from the funds of a number of bodies of Friends which, jointly, and in about equal shares as between England and America, have borne the cost, viz. The Yearly Meeting Fund of Friends in Great Britain, the Readership Committee of Woodbrooke College, Birmingham, whose grant of a fellowship enabled me to complete the text; and in America, funds connected with Philadelphia (Arch Street) Yearly Meeting, Philadelphia (Race Street) Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, and the Five Years Meeting.

A text so intricately composed from diverse sources will no doubt be found to contain faults. For these the editor must accept responsibility. The present edition provides Fox's own story in his own words and style. It is presented with the needs of the modern reader in view, and with the design that it may serve the author's purpose better in this day than the former standard editions, which made Fox's Journal known as one of the great religious autobiographies in the English language.

J.L.N.

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