



EAST LONDON HISTORY SOCIETY
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EDITORIAL

Our best wishes go to Professor S.T.Bindoff, of Queen Mary College, University of London, who has now retired. He started the East London History Group in 1952 and now as a Society, still remains its President. Professor Bindoff, an authority on Tudor England, has had world-wide acclaim for his many writings on this period, and we hope still to hear more of him in his retirement.

The collections held by the Guildhall Museum and the London Museum are being brought together into one collection in the new Museum of London, and for the first time 2000 years of the history of London will be exhibited in full under one roof. Both museums have a considerable number of exhibits from East London and it is hoped that there will be a special section in the new Museum, which will open at the end of 1976, for East London history. It is regrettable that for a year and a half no museum is open for visitors, the Guildhall Museum having closed in June 1974 and the London Museum closed last month. The time is needed to enable material to be removed and suitably dealt with.

It is heartening to know that a greenhouse has been installed at the Trinity School, Barking Road, part of the cost being borne by the pupils themselves, for horticultural classes. Though we may never again see the rose hedges which bordered Rose Lane, and the honeysuckle which gave Stratford the "sweet air" to which Dickens referred, some of these East London children may bring fragrance and colour to those East London back gardens which are today sadly neglected.

The Spitalfields walk led by Miss Sanson on the 29th May was highly successful. It is not widely known that Dr.Isaac Watts lived for many years at No.3 Wood Street and composed many of his well-known hymns under one of the mulberry trees which were famous in the area. Spitalfields has had two centuries of overcrowding. The Huguenot weavers in the 1840's worked 18 in a room 24' x 14' and only 8' high. Then the influx of poor Irish caused great hardship and congestion. Around the 1900's many of the Jews, especially the Polish immigrants in the Goulston Street area, were living a family to a room. Now the overcrowding is with the Pakistani element. Christ Church, built in 1729, was visited, looking sadly derelict. Plans have been drawn up for its renovation and it is hoped that it will yet play a vital part in the future development of Spitalfields.

Another East London market is gradually disappearing - the Purdett Road street market. In the 1920's there were shops and stalls on both sides of the road. The stalls were removed from the western side in the 1940's and gradually the shops on that side have closed. The stalls on the eastern side are diminishing and with proposals under way to redevelop the vicinity, the market is likely to be removed from the main road, as has been done at Stratford.

The programme for the season 1975/76 is now in hand. Attendances at meetings have been very poor during the past season and to avoid lecturers coming long distances to speak to so few, we have decided to be 'local' this year. Please do your best to support these meetings as the future of your Society, particularly in relation to its activities is very much in the balance. The first Meeting will be held on Wednesday, 24th September, at Queen Mary College, at 7.15 p.m. Make a note in your Diary. Mr.French will be speaking on "The Clothing Industry of East London". This is a fascinating study and it will be well worth while deserting the television set for one evening.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Q.M.C. on Wednesday, the 22nd October 1975. In the meantime, may you have a pleasant summer holiday.

A.H.F.

"The Life of Joseph Haynes and List of Coaches that run
between 1819 to 1840."

"I was born at Penton Place, Clerkenwell, on 28 of March 1835. My father was born at the Swan Hotel Dunstable in 1813. My mother was born at a private Hotel at the corner of Redcross Street and Whitecross Street City in 1806. Her father was a Silversmith opposite Cripplegate Church. My father was a guard on the York Mail when I was born and in 1841 they took it off, he then drove an Omnibus from Camden Town to Kennington Gate. My mother took me to see Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, Princess Royal and Prince of Wales to see the Opening of the New Library in Lincoln's Inn fields in 1843. We then moved to Kennington Cross. My mother was paying 1/2 per quartern for Bread, 2/4 per pound for Butter and 6/8 per pound for Tea, and in 1845 the Corn Laws Bill past (sic) the Bread come down 8 per quarter, Butter 1/6 per pound, Tea 3/8 per pound. I went to see the first match played at Kennington Oval in 1845. We then moved to Queens Row, Kennington Common, and in 1847 I was laid with fever six months, my brother died at the side of me. We then moved to Kennington Place. I then started to work for Mr. Taad, Cheesemonger, Kennington Common, and in 1848 I had to give it up, it was hard for me. We then moved to South Street, Kennington Park. I then started to work for Mr. Burgess, Tailor, Kennington Park, till I got my licence as a Conductor on 27 of February 1851.

I then started for Mr. Wheatley from Wandsworth Road to the City on the first of March. The next morning my Coachman didn't show up so I had to drive 3 and 4 hours that day. I was only there a fortnight, the Conductor was laid up so (sic) I had to leave. I then started for the Kings Cross and Barnsbury Park Omnibus Association till 1857. I then started for Mr. Armstrong, Engineers, London Docks, as time keeper and Store Keeper and in 1859 I helped to erect the first 9 pound Gun at Marlborough House. I had to fetch Lord Palmerston, Lord Panmure and Lord John Russell from the Home Office to see the Gun at Marlborough House. I had to leave (when) the contract was done. I then started as a Conductor for Mrs. Birch from Westminster to the Bank of England. I was there (sic) six months. The Coachman couldn't drive the (omnibus) so (sic) I took it on. I drove it a month. It was to (sic) hard for me 8 o'clock in the morning till 12 o'clock at night. I then drove for Mr. Covington from St. Paul's Churchyard to Kew Gardens, Richmond, and Hampton Court. I drove to the Derby my first time when Kettledrum beat (?) Dundee and in 1860 I drove for the London General Omnibus Company from Notting Hill Gate to London Bridge. My second journey from the Marble Arch my Conductor said all right pull in and cut a Hansom Cab coming bye (sic) at the time the Driver hit my offside horse's side with his whip and they bolted with me. I couldn't stop them till I got to Notting Hill Gate. My Riders presented me with 18/6 for saving there (sic) lives. We done the journey in 8 minutes the fastest time on record. My Foreman told me I was the Champion Driver on the road. The same horses run away with a omnibus in the Euston Road a month before and knocked down 5 lamp posts and (? the driver) was flung upon the sixth lamppost so (sic) I thought I was very lucky in saving 21 passengers lives. I drove a Wellington Omnibus from Notting Hill Gate down Holborn Hill to the Bank of England to Fenchurch Street Station in 35 minutes Express.

I left the Company to Brake (sic) some young horses in for Mister Waine of Kennington Butts. I drove Squire Oswaldston to the Derby when Caractacus beat Buston and Margussin in 1861. I then drove for Mr. Smith from Barnsbury Park to Kennington Park. I left him to drive for Mr. Martin from Dalston to Bayswater; he sold off in 1862. I then drove for Mrs. Ann Savage from Elephant and Castle to Farringdon Street Station till 1864. I then drove for Mr. Williamson from Clapham to the City till 1865. I then drove a John Bull Omnibus from Clarendon Road to

Whitechapple (sic) Church till 1867. I then drove for Mr.Fowkes from Clapham to Oxford Street 1868. I then drove for the Company when they (sic) put me on a City Atlas Omnibus to make a bus of it leaving Swist (sic) Cottage, St.Johns Wood, at 22 past 9 in the morning arriving at the Bank of England 8 to 10 Express. I drove it 2 years and a half. I was living at Old Ford at the time. I used to leave half past six in the morning arriving (? home) 11 o'clock at night. I got shifted to Mile End and drove from Mile End to Bayswater till 1871. I then drove for Mr. Edwards from Whitechapple (sic) to Bayswater leaving Notting Hill Gate 22 past 9 on (sic) (the) morning arriving at the Bank of England 8 to 10 Express and in 1872 I drove to (the) Derby Oaks Spring Meeting and the Marquis of Westminster Coming of Age at Taplow Garden party. They (sic) sold off. I then drove for Mr. Pistel from Mile End to Bayswater. I drove to (the) Spring meeting Derby and Oaks 1873 and 1874. They (sic) sold off. I then drove for Mr.Ellis from Mile End to Bayswater from 1874 to 1888. I gave up Omnibus driving. I then drove a hansom cab for Mr.Lee of Mile End till 1890. I had been to Derby and Oaks 22 times. I then drove for Mr. Lutten, Cab Proprietor, Victoria Park Road till the Great Cab Strike 1894. I then started my own Hansom Cab 10 years. I had a four wheeler 8 years and on 27 February 1911 was my Anniversary of 60 years Licence. My Vicar made me (h)is Warden at St. Benets Church, Mile End Road, and in 1813 (1913) I met with an accident. I had to give it up. I got the Old Age Pension 5s per week. I am the Grandson of Mr.Joseph Haynes of Dunstable, Oxford, and Salop Stage Coach proprietor and (known) for (h)is famous Drive from Oxford to the White Horse Cellars, Piccadilly, in 3 hours and 40 minutes, a distance of 56 miles. It was done for a wager by the Late Duke of Beaufort who rode on the Box at the time. My father drove the last Coach out of London to Hereford, leaving the White Horse Hotel, Fetter Lane 6 past 5, 132 miles the (?) Paul Pry (?rhyming slang for "the whole way"). With one passenger all the way, an Old Lady who rode the old (?whole) Distance especial record in "Good Old Times".

Joseph Haynes, 5 Bancroft Road, Mile End.
(by courtesy of Tower Hamlets Libraries Dept.)

Jewish Festivals (2)

PASSOVER

The Feast of the Passover (Pesach to use the Hebrew Term) is one of the most joyous of all the annual Jewish festivals. Celebrated in the spring, in the month Nisan (March-April) it is a great family occasion. Just as members of scattered Christian families try to get home for Christmas, so Jewish families make an effort to reassemble for the Passover.

The Origin of the Feast.- According to the Biblical record the Feast was appointed to be kept by the people of Israel "for ever" (Exodus 12,17) to commemorate the night when the angel of destruction passed over the houses of the Israelites when the first-born of Egypt were slain and the deliverance of the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt. The Celebration of the Passover is combined with the keeping of the Feast of Unleavened Bread and no leaven is permitted in Jewish homes during the eight days of the Feast (seven days in Israel). This again commemorates the fact that when the children of Israel fled from Pharaoh they had no time to leaven their bread.

Finally when a careful search has been made in the house to make sure it is free from leaven the Passover table is prepared for the Seder (Feast). On the table is placed the roasted shank-bone of a lamb, a reminder that until the destruction of the Temple in A.D.70 which brought all sacrifices to an end, the Paschal Lamb previously offered in the Temple was eaten.

All the other objects on the Passover table have a symbolic or commemorative meaning. The Roasted egg is variously interpreted as symbolising a "spring" fertility or festival burnt-offering, or as a sign of mourning. Hard-boiled eggs are one of the commonest foods in the week of mourning. Bitter herbs, usually horse-radish recall the bitter lot of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt. Salt water speaks either of the tears of the slaves or of the water of the Red Sea in which the Egyptians were drowned. The "Charoseth" is a brown paste made of nuts, raisins, cinnamon, wine and apple, and looks like the mortar or clay with which the Israelites were forced to build the treasure-cities of the Pharaohs. Finally, three "matzos", pieces of unleavened bread recall the haste with which the Hebrews fled and the "bread of affliction" eaten in the Land of Egypt. Candles are of course, lit as at every Jewish ceremonial meal and wine is provided so that each individual may drink four glasses of wine.

The Passover Ritual. When all are assembled after the men have returned from the synagogue the youngest present will ask "Why is this night different from all other nights?", recalling the Biblical anticipation that the children would ask "What mean ye by this service?" (Exodus 12,26). In reply the father, as head of the household, replies by reciting the long "Haggada" the story of the deliverance from Egypt, illustrating various points with appropriate actions. For example when recounting the plagues he dips his finger in the cup and causes one drop of wine to fall for each plague. The whole recital lasts about two hours. At one point all the symbols on the Passover are explained and the door having been left open an invitation is given to the poor and hungry to come in and partake. At one point the father takes the middle "matzo" of the three which have been covered with a linen cloth and breaks it in half. Over one half he says, "This is the bread of affliction which your fathers ate in the land of Egypt" and distributes it to be shared by those at the table. The other half is wrapped in a napkin and hidden until the end of the feast when it is recovered and brought out triumphantly usually by one of the children. The precise significance of this custom is not clear. A hearty meal then follows, enjoyed by all.

The significance of the Feast. It may be said that to the Jew the Feast has a significance for the past, present and future. As he thinks of the past he recalls not only the deliverance from Egypt but the faithfulness of God to his people, despite many sufferings, throughout the ages. This encourages him to feel that, whatever the nature of his present sufferings the God of his fathers is with him. The Passover has a "forward" look also. A place is laid for Elijah, the herald of Messiah, in accordance with the tradition that he will return before Messiah comes. Either the door is left open or someone, sometimes a young couple, go out to see if Elijah is on his way. Throughout the centuries the Jews have said, "Now we eat as slaves, next year as free men. Now we eat here, next year Jerusalem". The Passover thus expresses firm confidence in the faithfulness of the God of Israel and has had a special significance in times of persecution of which unhappily the Jewish people have had plenty of experience.

Christians and the Passover. No Christian should hesitate to accept an invitation to a Passover Meal given by a Jewish friend. The Passover should be of special interest to Christians since the Gospels record that it was in the setting of this Festival that the "Eucharist" or "Lord's Supper" was instituted. Passover associations have clung to the Christian Easter Festival which takes place at about the same time. The Traditional lesson for Mattins on Easter Day in the Church of England is Exodus 12, the account of the Institution of the Passover and on that day instead of the "Venite" the "Easter Anthems" are appointed beginning, -

"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast;

Not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor.5,7).

THE STORY OF WEST HAM PEOPLE, NAMES & PLACES

Where in West Ham were Rob Roy Town, Hudson Town and Halls Ville? Maps of only one hundred years ago give the answer. Old maps, surveys and deeds are a valuable source of information on place names and local history in general, and are a fascinating study in themselves.

Rob Roy Town was the name in the 1850's of the area of little old streets on either side of Plaistow Road now covered by New Plaistow Road and the Guinness Trust. The origin of the name is not yet known.

Hudson (or Hudson's) Town was an early name (half-official - half nickname) for the first part of Stratford New Town built to house the workers at the (then) Eastern Counties Railway Works. It was named after George Hudson, the 19th century "railway king" who managed the "Eastern Counties" from 1845 until his ruinous "fall" in 1849. Waddington Road and Street are named after David Waddington M.P., whom he introduced as his Deputy Manager.

Hudson was one of the speculators who made a fortune during the development of the railways and, at one time, had between 1,000 and 1,500 miles of railroad largely under his control. He was associated with George Stephenson in railway extension in the North of England, numbered the Prince Consort among his acquaintances and entered Parliament. He was heavily involved in the rapid depreciation of railway shares from 1847, and in 1849 was forced to resign the chairmanship of the "Eastern Counties" and four other large railway companies of the time.

The book "The Railway King, 1800-1871 - A Study of George Hudson and the Business Morals of His Time" by Richard S. Lambert (1934) is an interesting study.

Hallsville was the area off the Victoria Dock Road between Canning Town and Tidal Basin, first developed to house workers at what became the Thames Iron Works. It was apparently named from a Mr. Hall who owned there a number of the cottage dwellings which received severe criticism in the Board of Health enquiry into the sanitary conditions of the parish of West Ham in 1855.

What we now call "old" Canning Town was developed at the same time, and in the same manner, to house the workers on the Victoria Dock construction. The origin of the name "Canning" has not yet been determined. The 1855 enquiry - held by Alfred Dickens (the younger brother of the novelist) - adequately describes the first Canning Town: "This district is completely unpaved. The roads are not dedicated to the parish and they remain with last winter's ruts, in some cases two and three feet deep. Although the roads are left in this state, the inhabitants pay a highway rate for the rest of the parish. Deep holes at intervals in the middle of the streets filled with stagnant water, pigs wallowing in some of these filthy spots. The limits of the commission's scheme of drainage exclude the whole of this part, which is on the other side of the North Woolwich branch of the Eastern Counties Railway."

Detailed maps of West Ham are available from about the middle of the 18th century and from then on, the gradual development of the modern county borough can be traced in a very useful series of maps and surveys. Our earliest such map is the West Ham part of John Roque's great map of London taken in 1741-45.

The major place names mentioned are Stratford, Westham, Plaistow and Upton. There are smaller entries for Chobham, "West Ham Abbey" and Maryland Point (to which we will return). Of named roads - Angel Lane leads off the Broadway (it was called Kentish Lane in the older document of the 17th century), and on its western side at the Windmill Lane end, a Hop Ground covers the site of the modern railway and sidings.

Vicarage Lane is "Ass House Lane", West Ham Lane is "Stratford Lane", St. Mary's Road is "Purse Lane" (an alternative for Purlshill Lane and Palsey Lane) and Boundary Road is "Broadgate Lane". Barking Road is not there, of course, but a more winding "Brewers Lane" roughly follows its modern direction from the Greengate to the

Boleyn. The basic road structure of Old Forest Gate and Plaistow can be seen, although roads are not all named. South and west of Plaistow village stretch the marshes of "Plaistow Levelles".

The "Eagle and Child" and "Woodgrange Farm" are shown and the site of the College of Technology and Central Library is marked "Stratford Common". (A survey of the manor of West Ham in 1787 marks it as "Gallows Green"). Two windmills appear behind the modern "Pigeons Hotel" in Romford Road.

North of Stratford Broadway (about Salway Place) "Decenters Chapel" proves the original site of our oldest Congregational chapel before it moved (later in the century) to "Brickfields" in Welfare Road. Only one personal name is shown "Sir Robert Smith" at the modern West Ham Park. He is a descendant of the Alderman Robert Smyth who, as a Justice of the Peace, was prominent in West Ham affairs during the Commonwealth and was knighted soon after the Restoration. Not long after Rocque's map was drawn Smyth sold the property.

The first true atlas of Essex - Chapman & Andre's "Map of the County of Essex" (published in 1777) - gives an equally interesting picture of West Ham. We have the folio volume of 24 plates. Chapman & Andre show the same structure of roads as Rocque, but do not name them. They do, however, name some of the large houses and their contemporary owners... "John Henniker, Esq." at "Stratford House" (still partly visible behind shops in the Grove): "Dr. Fothergill" at "Ham House" (now West Ham Park) "Chas. Hatch Esq." at "Plashsett" - later the home of Joseph and Elizabeth Fry before they moved to "The Cedars" in the Portway.

"Green Street Hou" is marked (more popularly, but probably erroneously known as "Anne Boleyn's Castle") and the great Wanstead House and its grounds are shown in detail, and named as the seat of the Earl of Tylney. Of smaller place names "Holloway Down" and "Kan Hall" appear on the Leyton side of our border; there is a farm called "Moulseys" in the Forest Lane and - again - Maryland Point. The origin of this name is still not settled. Philip Morant in his great "History of Essex" says "Maryland Point is a cluster of houses near Stratford. The first of them were erected by a merchant who had got a fortune in that colony, from whence they took their name." Daniel Defoe in his tour through the Eastern Counties (1724) says: "The village of Stratford.... is not only increased but, I believe, more than doubled ... every vacancy filled up with new houses, and two little towns and hamlets, as they may be called, on the forst side of the town, entirely new, namely Mary-land-Point and the Gravel-Pits, one facing the road to Ilford.

The identity of the Maryland merchant is still debated. A reader who kindly drew our attention to a connection between our Stratford and the American general, Robert E. Lee, started us on a very interesting correspondence with the Librarian of the University of Virginia which looked as if it was leading to a clue. There is a "Maryland Point" on the Potomac River in Maryland, U.S.A. Near there, a Richard Lee purchased land, who also owned property in our Stratford in the mid-17th century, but the coincidence proved too good to be true. The historian of the Lee family of Virginia and Maryland states that Richard Lee's Stratford houses and land did not include our Maryland Point. A pity!

He was, however, the ancestor of the famous general of the southern forces in the American Civil War. The general was born at "Stratford House" (or Hall) erected by Richard Lee's grandson in Virginia. (Perhaps the name of the house was a coincidence too!) In the same house was born the Richard Henry Lee who moved the resolution in favour of the Declaration of Independence of the United States after the American Revolution. By further chains of historical coincidence, the Dr. Fothergill who owned our "Ham House" made strenuous efforts in correspondence with Benjamin Franklin to reconcile some of the differences which led to the Revolution.

A long correspondence in the historical and literary journal "Notes and Queries" suggests that the name of the Maryland merchant was Thomas Cornwallis, who

first went to America in 1633, made his fortune in Maryland, and returned to England in 1659 - while the Essex County Archivist is pursuing yet another line of enquiry. Somebody will find documentary proof one day.

F.Sainsbury, B.E.M.,A.L.A. 1962.

TOWER BRIDGE ENGINES GO FOR SALE

Great interest has been shown in the three hydraulic engines from Tower Bridge which went up for sale in February. As part of a modernisation programme, some of the original Victorian machinery, which has been operating since 1894, is to be replaced by more economical, electrical equipment and hence the sale. The Corporation built the bridge at a cost of more than £1 million and maintains it out of the Bridhe House Estates Fund, of which they are Trustees, at no cost to ratepayers.

The modernisation programme also includes new lighting which makes the bridge brighter at the same time as cutting electricity consumption by 60 per cent. The engines, which are constructed in cast iron and steel, transmit the power needed to lift the twin road sections of the bridge. Two are already in storage waiting for a buyer and a fourth may be kept as a tourist attraction.

The present design of the bridge is a modification of that of Sir Horace Jones, then City Architect, and was carried out by Sir John Wolfe Barry assisted by Mr. Brunel (the younger) and Mr. E.W. Cruttwell the Resident Engineer. It took eight years to build and was opened by Edward VII, then Prince of Wales. The machinery now on sale was constructed by Messrs. Armstrong Mitchell Ltd., which became Messrs. Vickers-Armstrongs Ltd. Until recent times the lifting sections, or bascules, were raised regularly for river traffic, which by Act of Parliament takes precedence over road traffic, and the engines have never failed. The bridge has been raised about half a million times but with the changed river activity today, the lifting rate has declines dramatically and under a recent Act of Parliament, 24 hours notice is now required by the Bridge Master for it to be lifted.

("Guildhall" - Corporation of London Newspaper, Feb.1975).

HOW WE CAME HERE (1) - THE HUGUENOTS IN SPITALFIELDS.

The first Huguenot refugees came from France after the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in 1572. They formed small colonies along the south coast at Sandwich, Canterbury, and Hove, and even Bristol, but it was in London that the largest number of them sought refuge. In 1580 the number of foreigners within the precincts of the City alone had increased by 5,000 since the previous census had been made a few years before.

How was this large influx of foreign refugees received? England was still mainly a pastoral and agricultural country; she already owed to foreign enterprise the development of a very large proportion of her industry. As well as dyeing and sugar refining, we had learned the art of brewing from the Flemings, clock-making from the Dutch, heavy tapestry making and printed paper hanging from the French. Even the curing and salting of fish were introduced by Dutch fishermen who had settled at Yarmouth and virtually monopolised the fishing off the England coast. We owed the making of glass to the French, which accounts for the fact that up to the present day the terms in use in glass manufacture are all of French origin. Because of all this Queen Elizabeth, with her typical shrewdness, realised from the first how much England stood to gain from the knowledge of rare crafts which the Huguenot immigrants brought with them and of what value they could be to the country in the expansion of its still backward industry. She did everything she could to counteract the resentment and prejudice which their immigration had aroused.

In 1589 the Edict of Nantes was passed in France giving the Huguenots the right to practise their Faith. They became a wealthy community and Louis XIV, casting covetous eyes on their wealth to fill his war-depleted coffers, revoked the Edict in 1685. A great massacre followed and, in spite of the ban on leaving, nearly 200,000 Huguenots managed to escape, an estimated 80,000 landing in England and Ireland. That the East End received the largest proportion of them can be seen from the fact that 13,000 settled here in the year 1687 alone. The area chosen for their settlement was Spital Square which, being the site of the old monastery of St. Mary's, Spittle, was outside the jurisdiction of local government and therefore gave greater freedom from the restrictions imposed upon them elsewhere,

The settlement of such a large number of immigrants with habits and language different from their neighbours led inevitably to a certain amount of resentment. Dr. Welton, the High Church Vicar of St. Mary Matfelon, said "this set of rabble are the very offal of the earth, who cannot be content to be safe here from that justice from which they fled and to be fattened on what belongs to the poor of this country and to grow rich at our expense, but must needs rob us of our religion too." Minorities throughout the ages have always been blamed for bringing with them all kinds of imaginary misfortunes. We all know the temptation to "blame the other fellow" when we have quarrelled or to find causes which seem to relieve ourselves of responsibility when things go wrong. The Huguenots, the "gentle and profitable strangers", were no exception to this; they had their enemies. No doubt there were those who resented the fact that, being all artisans, they were little inclined to manual labour, or who found their pious and thrifty habits irritating and their community stand-offish. But on the whole they were accepted into local life with surprisingly little disturbance.

In 1708 they were naturalised by an Act of Parliament and for the next fifty years they formed a lively and flourishing East End community. Nearly the whole of Spitalfields was developed by them and even today many of the street names there recall their sojourn - Fournier Street (where the old master weavers' houses, with their fine doorways and stair-cases, are still standing), Duval Street, Calvin Street, Fleur de Lis Street, and others. No less than 11 Huguenot churches were built in Spitalfields and Bethnal Green in which the services were conducted in French. During the third generation, however, the community began to decline rapidly. The youth no longer understood French, intermarriage had taken place, and many had joined the local churches or Nonconformist sects. In 1782, at the centenary of the church in Artillery Street, which had been one of the first Huguenot churches to be built, M. Bourdillon, the pastor, spoke of the "growing aversion of the young for the language of their fathers from whom they almost seemed ashamed to be descended". When to this was added some years later the decay of the industry of silk-weaving owing to the introduction of machine-driven looms and the change in fashions, driving many away from London to seek their fortunes elsewhere, as well as the anti-French feelings during the Napoleonic wars which led some of even the poorer Huguenots to change their names, the Huguenots as an organised community could no longer resist assimilation. The last Huguenot church was taken over by the Methodists in 1819. At this date the Norman Society, one of the Friendly Societies started by them in Bethnal Green, still kept its records in French, and the French Hospital, which had moved to Hackney from Spitalfields in 1750, had a statute on its books (apparently in force till the end of the nineteenth century) to the effect that there must always be in the hospital one French-speaking male and female inmate who were of Huguenot descent. In the life of the East End today, however, the last traces of the Huguenot community have been almost entirely obliterated. French names - Durant, Duval, Lee Grice (le Gris), Dore, and many others - are still common, and in the south-west corner of Bethnal Green there are a few families left who are proud of their Huguenot ancestry. But this is all.

(Schools Committee, Council of Citizens of E. London).