5th Month, 26th day, 1770
22nd of 2nd Mo 1749

We are all familiar with the change from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian one in 1752/53; however, those of us who have ancestors who were members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) are sometimes confused when we encounter dates that are listed with the days and months numbered rather than named.

WHY DO QUAKERS NUMBER MONTHS AND DAYS?
Quakers objected to the naming of days and months after heathen gods; therefore, used the numbering system to identify the date. We encounter a date that our computer genealogical data base will not accept except by overriding the acceptable entry. The basis for numbering rather than naming days and months, Samuel G. Barton of the University of Pennsylvania found in the “Act of the First General Assembly of Pennsylvania” on December 7, 1682.¹

And bee it enacted by the Authority aforesaid that ye first, second & third days of ye week & ye months of ye year, Shall be called as in Scripture, and not by Heathen names, (as are vulgarly used,) as ye first, Second & third dates of ye week, and first Second & Third months of ye year, beginning with ye first day called Sunday, and ye third month called March.¹

Occasionally a researcher will encounter Quaker dates recorded before 1953 with the names of the months from September to December which the Friends did not find objectionable since they were derived from numbers rather than “heathen gods.”

WHICH DATE IS CORRECT?
Was David Stokes born in January or November? I must admit that I originally listed David Stokes as having been born in November because that is the date usually recorded on the internet. However, that was incorrect. Jim Robertson, the first president of Root Seekers Genealogical Society, was kind enough to refer me to information that corrected my “Quaker dates.”

RECORDING QUAKER DATES
Generally, and I emphasize generally, Quaker dates prior to January 1, 1752 are recorded as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st month</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd month</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd month</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th month</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th month</td>
<td>February</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are several ways to record Quaker dates prior to 1752. Consider the birth and death dates on the tombstone of John Stokes, second son of John Stokes who is buried in the Rancocas Quaker continued on next page

²Szeliga, Diane B., familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/s/z/e/GENE15-007.html
³Tysinger, Barbara A., ftp.rootsweb.ancestry.com/pub/roots-1/genealog
Burying Ground, in Willingboro, New Jersey. There on the stone is chiseled “born 5th mo 16th 1713, died.” (On other occasions the researcher may find this recorded as “16 v 1713” where the day is indicated by Arabic numerals and the month by Roman numerals. Now consider four ways this may be recorded:

Original: 5th mo 16th 1713 (preferred recording system)
Recorded #1: 16 July 1713
Recorded #2: 16 5th mo [July] 1713 (square brackets)
Recorded #3: 5th mo 16th 1713 o.s. (Old Style indicates that the date has not been converted.)

I have stated that the preferred recording system is the original entry. However, if the researcher is using commercial software that does not allow a non-standard date entry to override the standard entry, it is best to record only the year without any reference to the month and day.

Beginning 1 January 1752, the first month began following the English practice and designated January as the first month. Again, I must emphasize, generally. There are always exceptions to any rule.

According to the Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, in England, Wales, Ireland, and the British Colonies the Quaker year until 1952 officially began on 25 March. For example: 24 March 1725 was followed by 25 March 1726. This presents another problem in understanding the Quaker calendar system.

If we did not have enough problems, we see that our first president was born on “11th Day of February 1731/2.” Dates which fell from January 1 to March 24, 1583 to 1752, were affected by the change to the Gregorian calendar which changed the first of the year from March 25 to January 1. For these 170 years knowledgeable clerks and recorders accommodated both calendar systems as different countries and groups such as the Quakers approved the change. This was done by “dual” or “double-dating.”

We see this in Mary Washington’s Bible where she noted the birth of her son George. She has recorded the birth as 1731/2 indicating the old Julian date first and the new Gregorian date second. According to President Washington’s mother, he was born on 11 February 1732 as determined by the present calendar in use today.

*Quaker Dating before 1752, swarthmore.edu/x7968.xml*
*Adamson, Terry L., Dual Dating and the Gregorian Calendar Conversion in Great Britain and Its Colonies, Adamsonancestry.com/calendar*