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ABOUT THE COVER

The March 2006 cover of *Genealogists' Magazine* derives from a photograph of a painting of James Slater Fall (1775-1817). To the best of my knowledge, the Fall family brought the painting with it when emigrating from London to Kentucky in 1817. It later spent time in Mississippi, in the possession of George Ricardo Fall (1808-1869), third son of James Slater Fall and his wife, Katherine Barratt Fall (1778/9-1817). A few years after George's death, his widow, Eliza Lewis Cameron McNutt Fall (1813?-1893) saved the painting from a fire that destroyed her home in Arcola, Mississippi, and after that disaster she sent it to George's sister, Harriet Fall Jones (1813-93), of Collierville, Tennessee. It is presently in the possession of Harriet Jones' great-granddaughter, Pauline Johnson Monroe of Kensington, Maryland.

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Partial Descent from James Slater Fall (JSF) and Catherine Barratt Fall



The concept of "once removed" relates to the number of steps that any two kin are descended from their closest common ancestor. In the chart above, James Huey Fall, Jr. and Edward A. Fall, Jr. are 3rd cousins – both great-great grandchildren of James Slater Fall. Jef Fall, however, is one step further from JSF than James Huey Fall, Jr., making Jef and Jim, Jr. 3rd cousins once removed. By the same rule, James Huey Fall, Sr. and Jef Fall are 2nd cousins, twice removed. Without looking ahead at the answer, what kin are James Woods Fall and Tyler Samuel Fall? (1st c's, 4x removed)

THE LIFE AND MILITARY CAREER OF JAMES SLATER FALL

FROM MYTHS AND RECOLLECTIONS TO FAMILY HISTORY

PETER HORNE

I was asked if I could help with an ongoing puzzle concerning one James Slater Fall (1775-1817), primarily about the nature of his military service, by an American descendant. This was the country James had emigrated to with his family by 1817. There was a large amount of material available including extracts from his own *Sea and Land Journal*, and also letters and recollections by his children and later generations. I was presented with ten pages of extracts from these and asked to find out what I could, not only on military matters but also about James Fall and his life in Britain before he emigrated.

An example of the difficulties facing me was his date of birth, which was calculated by his son Philip quoted from the *Sea and Land Journal* that 'had my father lived till March 1818 he would have been 43'. From this a birth date of 1775 was assumed, but I had not seen this document and did not know the exact context of the quote. Fortunately parish records showed the marriage of a James Slater Fall to Katharine Barratt in Tottenham Parish Church, Middlesex, on 16 June 1798 and some of their children - Philip, William, Catherine and Elizabeth - were baptised in Chelsea and Lambeth between 1798 and 1806. Somewhat more ominously he faced bankruptcy proceedings in 1812, from entries in the *Times* and the *London Gazette* in March and November. These record him having his business in Spread Eagle Court, Threadneedle Street, City of London, being of the Stock Exchange, broker, dealer and chapman. So there were facts covering significant aspects of his life, and his reasons for emigrating could be a result of dealing with the bankruptcy proceedings.

There was also information about his father Jonathan Fall, who was a member of the Upholders Company. 'A not-too successful member who was living in an almshouse as early as 1790 (he died in 1798), so it seems that James was educated above his station. It is tempting to speculate that his uncle Philip Slater (1728-1808), a highly successful pharmacist, may have sponsored his nephew in some fashion.' All this from my client who had spent a long time researching at a distance and dealing with anecdotes and speculation about his ancestors left by previous generations.

In addition to known facts the various accounts from the children give a somewhat confusing but fascinating picture of their father. The eldest child, Philip Slater Fall, was born in September 1798, near Brighton he says, because his father was stationed there in military service at the time. This is the earliest date that a military connection is mentioned. The second son, William Fennings Fall, wrote in the *Gospel Advocate* on 1 January 1890:

'Our father J.S. Fall was a commander in the English army and was abroad in the service three years, which accounts for the difference in ages of brother and myself. Having a respite he visited this country with a brother officer named Sheffield and his two eldest sons, left Liverpool in the ship Essex for New York. We lived in the vicinity of London at a beautiful home, 'Battersea cottage'.'

Later he records that his father finally left London in 1817 in the ship *Criterion* for New York, having returned earlier to England to take his position in the army due to the war of 1812. In a later letter to his great nephew Philip he

repeats this and adds also that his *'father's ship took 41 days to cross the Atlantic and in the interim the army for New Orleans was formed and he lost his position. He sold his home for a considerable sum Mr. Montgomery paid him... Father brought his dress uniform with him...'*

Eliza Fall Adams, his fifth child, wrote in her 'Family recollections' that her earliest memories are of living in a beautiful cottage at Battersea. *'Father was connected with the Stock Exchange and came to America with Philip and William to settle a land claim for some noblemen. He was so pleased with this country that he left his sons at school there and returned later with the rest of the family though the war of 1812 delayed his return.'* In a letter of c1870 she also recalled a *'scarlet coat covered with gold lace, an epaulet on each shoulder that Mother used to show us children... and made me think he must be a great officer.'*

Another variation on the theme of travelling between England and America is in an obituary of Philip Fall, the eldest son, found in the *Western Argus*, Frankfort, Kentucky 4 December 1890, which states that Philip was brought to



James Slater Fall (1775-1817) Photograph of an oil painting, owned by Pauline Johnson Monroe of Kensington, Maryland, great-granddaughter of Harriet Fall Jones (1813-1893)

America by his father in 1809 when he was eleven. He was left in the care of General Cadwalader of the US army and went to school near Philadelphia. In 1812 he returned to England and came back with his father in 1817 settling in Logan County, Kentucky. In support of this there is a letter received by James Fall from Thomas Cadwalader of Philadelphia in August 1812 that clearly indicates his eldest two sons are at school in the USA. His youngest children were born around this time: James in 1812, Harriet in 1813, and Alexander in 1815 probably in Kelvedon, Essex.

His granddaughter Elizabeth Fall Taylor writes of her Fall background in a long letter:

'Papa's father, James Fall was a colonel in the British Army, but I do not know he was at Waterloo; and must have had a large fortune which he lost through heavy endorsements for a friend...'

Naturally enough a great grandson Philip Fall Taylor also states that JSF was a colonel in the British Army:

'I have heard my grandfather say JSF was a colonel in the Scotch Grays.'

But he also has a tale of fighting alongside Sir Peter (or Hyde) Parker the day Parker died and being given a carnelian watch seal by the great man when he was convinced he would not live beyond that day! Most interesting of all :

'Grandfather told me his father bought a ship and cargo to engage in the East India Trade, in partnership with another man, but the other fellow went off with the money for the ship and ran off to the Continent and left great-grandfather to pay the bills in full. This almost broke him so he decided to emigrate to America.'

Such a fascinating collection of recollections and anecdotes left me bemused and intrigued. I had to find more verifiable facts about the military service of James Slater Fall. Later anecdotes seemed to be more definite than earlier memories, but clearly could not be relied upon. Indeed the later the account the more glorious was the picture they painted of an illustrious British officer in the Scotch Grays, who might

have served at Waterloo! All this may have been inevitable as his descendants naturally put him on a pedestal especially as he died almost as soon as he arrived, leaving his children alone almost before they could begin life in America.

My client produced a series of questions that were very useful as he had spent years thinking and probing on the matter. Were there any army reserves at that time? How did JSF come to be in the army in 1798 and be a broker in 1807? Was the description of his uniform a useful tool? Could I check all the names mentioned to see which regiment they served in etc, and if they led to Fall. But basically please would I consult army records in The National Archives. There was a great deal of information, but it appeared to me that much was a fascinating family myth built up over generations. Now I tried to find out what was true.

Bearing in mind the Army interest and ignoring any doubts, I began with a search of the Army Lists from 1798 to 1817 in order to find out whether James Slater Fall was an officer in the British Army. There was no entry for him at all. I checked in WO97 to see if he was a mere soldier, but there was no entry either. I then checked through the Yearbooks for Militia Officers for the period 1798 to 1812, as this seemed much more likely to fit in with a business life as a broker, but he was not there either. Clearly one had to start with the known facts and hope that searching for him as a broker and checking for his father in the Upholders' Company might lead somewhere. In London Directories of the early 1800s I found entries for Fall and Blackburn of Spread Eagle Court.

I pondered this and the penny dropped! I realised that there was every reason for him to be a Freeman if he worked in the City, and of course his father already was a Freeman. So I went to the Corporation of London Record Office who held the City Freedom admission papers (now at the London Metropolitan Archives) and they show a James Slater Fall admitted by patrimony in February 1800 through the Drapers' Company, one of the City Livery Companies. Also entered on the form is a year of

birth given as 1775 with Crutched Friars as the address, and so at last I had confirmation of a year for his birth. However I have still not found a parish entry for his baptism in any of the City parishes.

The freedom entry form gives a list of six names supporting the application: first amongst them John Lamb, draper of Mile End. Next I approached the Drapers' Company and they kindly sent me the details about James Slater Fall, who was admitted to the freedom of that company on 30 January 1800 on the Testimony of John Lamb, Citizen and Draper; and William Humphrey, Citizen and Merchant of Spread Eagle Court. Both these men were residents at Bancroft's almshouses from 1791 and so they would have known James's father Jonathan, as they were all residents there. This explains their acting as sponsors to his son, after Jonathan died in 1798. It also gave the first mention of Spread Eagle Court.

James Slater Fall became a Liveryman in 1805, his name remains in the Livery lists until 1818. The Spread Eagle Court address is given for his business in these lists from 1805 to 1812. He took an apprentice, one T. Love, in 1800 at which time James Fall was described as a Wine Merchant of Spread Eagle Court, Finch Lane. Love was freed from the apprenticeship only in 1813 when Fall was a still listed as a stockbroker. So he was still active in business then.

The next step was to examine the bankruptcy proceedings of 1812 when in March the London Gazette published a Commission requiring him to answer on 28 March, 4 April and 5 May. I found the register entry in B4/31, which also gives these dates but it is unusual in that there is no date for the Commission. This is the date when one is finally declared bankrupt. The person bringing the proceedings is named in B1/125 but his name meant nothing except that he came from Bristol. Then in November the *London Gazette* entry says the Commission is superseded. So it appears James Slater Fall was not made bankrupt, due perhaps to help from the Drapers' Company or his timely arrival back in London from America. Other family information

recorded him travelling back to Britain in 1812 ostensibly to rejoin his army regiment, but in any event he must have arrived back in time to defend himself and to settle his debts.

I had found out a number of facts about both James and his father through the City of London Record Office. Jonathan Fall became a Freeman of the Drapers' Company in 1759 as an Upholder of Ironmonger Lane. Later, in 1792 he was admitted to the almshouses after being on the Poor Roll of the Company from 1788, which accorded with my client's information fairly closely. His father, James Fall, a Baptist minister of Watford apprenticed Jonathan for seven years to Hickman Young in 1751, a Citizen and Draper of London. The master was paid £10.00 and Jonathan signed his indenture himself. When he became established he also took on two apprentices in 1767 and 1768. So father was an established Upholder for over twenty years in London and when he became unable to cope was admitted to the almshouses owned by the Drapers' Company where he was able to live until he died.

I had now found out something about James Slater Fall as a business man but nothing yet about his army career, if there was one. Bearing in mind that the City of London has its own Militia company, I decided to try there. The Honourable Artillery Company dates from 1537 and had since then been the volunteer armed force keeping order in the City. Individual members of the Company might venture abroad and even serve with the Army, but these were normally officers. The Archivist of the Honourable Artillery Company found that James Slater Fall, a hosier aged 22 years of No.84 Leadenhall Street, appeared before the Court of Assistants on 12 Jan 1797. He was proposed by J. Boulton, William Hughes, S. Pepys, J. Swayne and J. Furber and signed the vellum admission book on 19th January 1797 as recorded in the Minute Book. Only officers and NCO's are included in the printed lists published between 1798 and 1813, and there was no reference to Fall. So he joined as a private man not an officer. I was able to examine the cash books, which show that his last payment was made on 6

December 1798 to cover 1799. The first payment gave some cause for concern as he is entered as Richard Slater Fall paying two guineas to join and pay for 1797, the others fortunately have him as J. S. Fall paying one guinea for each following year. He served three years in all, and this agrees with the period mentioned by one of his children.

The Honourable Artillery company was in the main an infantry force, though they also had cavalry and some artillery, but they had a special prestige amongst the Militia. When a large parade of all London Militia units took place in Hyde Park on 4 June 1799 in front of the King the HAC were entered as No.1 on the plans, first in the line, and I am sure wild horses would not have kept James Fall away from this event. The King and government used the occasion to demonstrate that the country was able and willing to face the French in war, according to Simon Schama's TV *History of Britain!* The uniforms shown in Raikes *History of the HAC* show a red coat with epaulets were worn by the private men! So his red coat and gold braid with epaulets which looked so wonderful and made him an officer to childish eyes was the uniform of a private man in the Honourable Artillery Company. Perhaps the status accorded to this unit would have encouraged James Fall to make the most of his position when he met military men abroad! This seems to fit with the account from his *Sea and Land Journal* May 17th 1817: *'Introduced to General Heard (in Middlesex County, New Jersey). He was much pleased that I understood cavalry movements. Invited to be his aide-de-camp, a review being about to take place on the 19th, of all the cavalry in the district. I informed him of several new movements, which he is to put in practice on the day. He is an old General, who had the felicity of seeing us lay down our arms in the old war.'*

Clearly James Slater Fall was a man of great confidence and happy to discuss military matters with a General and to suggest new moves for cavalry.

Finally I turned to the addresses used by James Fall in Spread Eagle Court and 84 Leadenhall Street and also the cottage in Battersea. On

checking rate books for the City for the period when he was using these addresses I was unable to find him or his partner Blackburn listed. One assumes they had a small office and so were not required to be registered between 1805 and 1812. The Battersea Poor Rate Books held in the Wandsworth Local History Library collection were productive however. They record the payments made by each householder in the Parish and are signed by the Churchwarden, the Overseer of the Poor and witnesses for each quarter of the year. Under an area headed Battersea Fields there are about a dozen names entered and James Fall appears towards the end of 1805 and on without a break until 1808 when the house is marked 'empty at midsummer', before James Fall returns and stays until his last entry in 1812. The area appears to be part of Battersea Park nowadays and would appear to occupy an area close to Battersea Bridge. The absence in midsummer 1808 may be due to his first trip to the USA. As the entries end in 1812 it leaves a question as to where the family lived from then until they left Britain. But as the younger children were born in Kelvedon, Essex, between 1812 and 1815 this would appear to be where the family lived during those years. In fact there were eleven children all told, four were baptised at St. Mary's, Lambeth between 1801 and 1804, three at St. Lukes, Chelsea, between 1806 and 1810, then those at Kelvedon, Essex, and the final child born in the USA in 1817.

I had completed the search for the military history of James Slater Fall and his life before moving to America. He was clearly successful and adventurous enough to become a City merchant, who looked to America in 1808 or 1809 and left his eldest two sons at school there. He had a disaster in 1812 when he narrowly avoided bankruptcy, but perhaps his absence abroad led to this. Though his military career was not long he did serve in the Honorable Artillery Company for three years and then became a Freeman of the City. He was first a hosier in Leadenhall Street, then admitted to the Drapers' Company as a merchant and a wine merchant when taking an apprentice. Finally he was a Stock Exchange broker from 1805 until he went abroad. It was a tragedy that he died so young

with a young family still dependent, but according to my client there were enough funds to keep them comfortably for a few years. So his business ventures must have been reasonably successful, and the reasons for the bankruptcy proceedings may very well be hidden for ever, though a venture into the East India trade sounds perfectly feasible. It was very intriguing to see what the later family made of this man; how they built his reputation up and gave him an army career, a high rank and battle honours. As the first American he was extremely important for the family and while his actual history was not as extraordinary as their myths and legends, it was nevertheless an impressive achievement. He built on what his own father had achieved and tried to develop his skills in various ways. His masterstroke may have been to move to America, but the tragedy was that he did not live to enjoy the new life there.

References:

- Original information on family history, anecdotes and births supplied by James E. Fall, descendant of James Slater Fall, of New York.
- Corporation of London Record Office now London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Road, London, EC1R 0HB
- The Drapers' Company, Drapers Hall, Throgmorton Avenue London EC2N 2DQ
- Honourable Artillery Company, Armoury House, City Road London EC1Y 2BQ
- Wandsworth Local History Library, Battersea Library, 265 Lavender Hill, London SW11 1JB

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Peter Horne, 26 Combe Road, Combe Down, Bath BA2 5HX was a volunteer at SoG several years ago and has carried out genealogical research over the last ten years after retiring as a librarian. He recently moved to Bath but continues to visit London Archives and the Local Record Offices regularly to do research.

panies should be dressed strictly alike, according to the following pattern :—

"JACKET.—Breast Buttons of plated metal with the Prince of Wales's Crest and the words 'Hon. Artillery Company.' Jacket of superfine scarlet cloth, lined with white kerseymere or shalloon. Lappels, cuffs and collar Royal Blue, stitched down. Cuffs round, three inches deep. Lappel three inches at the collar, decreasing to two-and-a-half at the waist. Silver straw vellum lace, loops eight in each lappel, four on each cuff by twos. A slash pocket with 4 by 2. The hips and behind to be laced in form of a hollow diamond. A turnback of white cloth from the lappel to the bottom with a loop. Wings laced all round, same lace as loops, put on zigzag in six returns, with white edges and half-inch silver fringe at bottom. The collars to stand up. White cloth lining to appear all round the edges with a loop at each end. White cloth edges also to lappels and cuff. Cost from Twelve to Twenty Shillings.

"HELMET.—That the Divisions to all wear a leather Helmet, chained across the crown, black bearakin. White and red feather on the left side. Plated Prince's Plume on the right side, Edged with plated metal, and the words 'Arma Pacis Fulcra' in the front. The cost £1 11s. 6d.

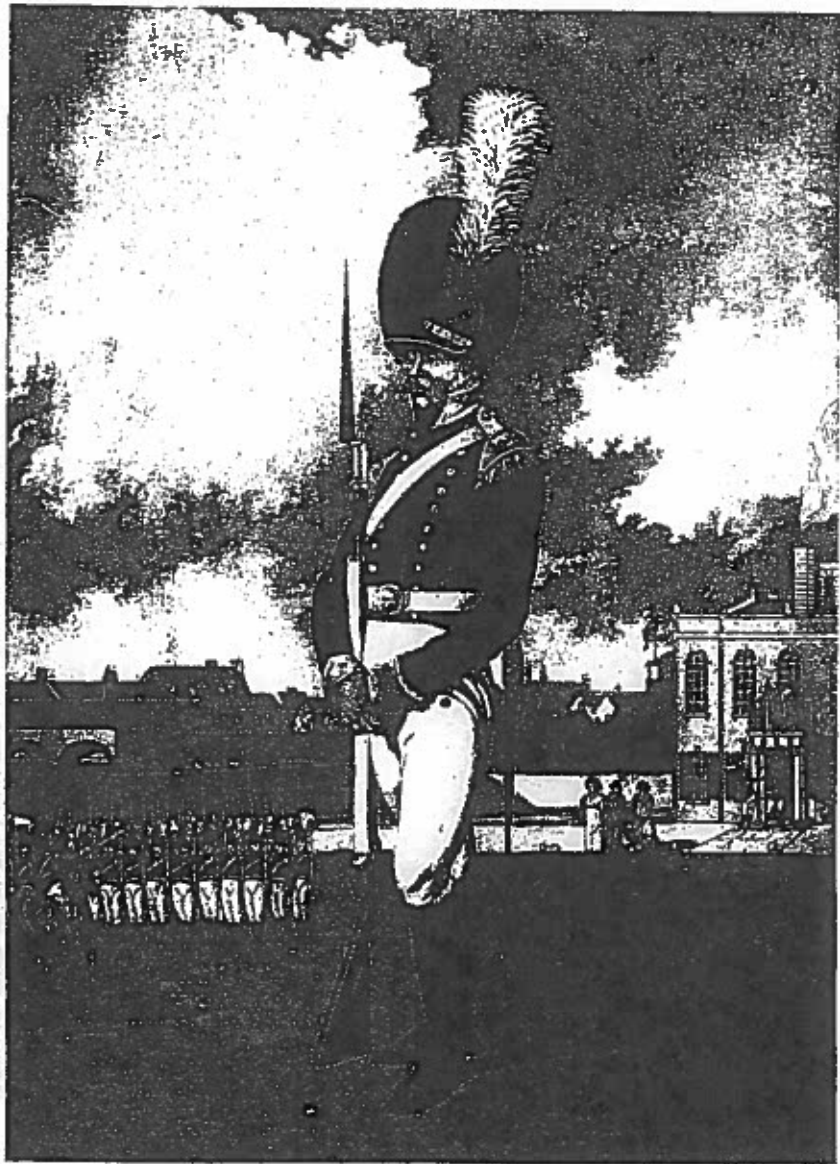
"PANTALOONS.—That the Divisions do all wear white Pantaloons, tongued, made of white kerseymere. The cost about 12s. to 15s. The Matross Division to wear a blue Jacket, faced and trimmed as the present coat, and a helmet cap as above described, except a yellow edging and red feather."

No person was, on any pretence whatever, to be admitted into the Company who was under the height of five feet three inches.

The Company was ordered to parade in the new uniform on Wednesday, the 3rd of May, at five o'clock in the afternoon.

At a Court on the 20th of April, the Committee of Accounts and Stores reported that there would be a deficiency at Michaelmas of about £600, which sum it was agreed to borrow from members by issuing bonds of £50 each. A special subscription was also opened to defray the expenses of the lawsuit with the Corporation.

In May an order was issued that the members, when under Arms, should wear their hair plaited, tied close to the head, and turned up under the cap with a flush, as little hair as possible showing at the sides. All the Officers to wear wings and scimitars.



UNIFORM OF THE INFANTRY DIVISION, 1797—1822.