



## FOUNDING FEMALES Female Qualifying Ancestor Index

**Female Ancestor Number: 167**

**Name:** Morris, Susanna (Heath)

**Dates:** ( 12 Oct 1682 - 28 Apr 1755)

**Colonial Society:** PA

**Date added to ROA:** 9-5-2024

**Service:** Quaker Minister, c.1711-1755

**Authority:** Larson, Rebecca, Daughters of Light, Quaker Women Preaching and Prophesying in the Colonies and Abroad, 1700-1775 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 88-90, 94-95, 313; "Susanna Morris." Minutes of the Yearly Meeting of Friends at Philadelphia Commencing the 19th of the Seventh Month 1747, pp. 92-93.

### **Biography:**

December 1728: the ship *Syzargh* has crashed into the rocks off the southeastern coast of Ireland. The shipwrecked survivors are clinging to the partly submerged vessel, battling not just incoming waves, but the deathly cold, frost, and snow. It would be nine hours before their rescue. The locals on shore reportedly stood watch, waiting to plunder the valuable cargo.

One survivor, Joseph Taylor, recalled the following:

*"This extraordinary woman had a sense given her, that they would not be safe on the side of the vessel much longer; and although it seemed very hazardous and dangerous to move and fasten to the lower side of the vessel, she urged them all to attempt it believing it would be the means of their preservation..."* She prevailed and according to a witness's account, an oncoming wave immediately threw the vessel flat onto the side they had just evacuated. She had saved them all from drowning.

The extraordinary woman in question was Susanna Heath Morris, a forty-seven-year-old Quaker Minister traveling from Philadelphia. This shipwreck became a mere inconvenience to Susanna, as she ultimately traveled through Ireland and Holland on what would be the first of three trips abroad. She would return, traveling through England, Scotland, and Wales, and back to Ireland and Holland in 1744 and 1752. On her second trip she was accompanied by Elizabeth Hudson Morris.

Susanna was born in Staffordshire, England, the daughter of Quakers Robert and Susanna Heath, as recorded at the Monthly Meeting of Uttoxeter. In 1701, when she was a young woman of 19, she immigrated with her family to Pennsylvania, surely seeking refuge from the religious persecution in their home country. They settled near the Abington Monthly Meeting, in present-day Montgomery County. Two years later (1703) Susanna married Morris Morris, a wealthy yeoman, who held extensive lands in



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Richland Township. The Morris family was part of the Welsh wave of Quakers who had arrived in 1690.

Records of Susanna's life can be found within her own diary, Meeting Minutes on both sides of the Atlantic, and Testimony (of the Monthly Meeting of Friends of Richland) given after her death. She had three sisters who were also ministers, but she was the only one who made transatlantic trips. She first appeared in the ministry in 1711 and was noted as *"a prophetic minister who testified against use of tobacco, liquor, and the use of 'you' for the single person."*

Another important fact to note is that Susanna and Morris were the parents of 13 children. That would mean that Susanna was likely still in her childbearing years when she made her first "shipwrecked" trip to Ireland. She was 70-years-old when she made her third voyage, then a grandmother and great-grandmother. Beyond his service as an Assemblyman, her husband Morris was also a devoted Quaker. He was an Elder, a Monthly Meeting overseer, and a representative to the Yearly Meeting. The Morris family also donated the site for the Richland Meeting house. And upon his death, not long after his wife, Morris left £100 in his will to establish a Quaker school.

Susanna died at age 73, and was called *"our Ancient worthy Friend"* in the Testimony.

Among the many things written was this:

*"Her memory still lives and yields a precious Saviour to those, who are measurably Sharers of the divine Love and Life with which she in an eminent degree was endowed, and was frequently made an Instrument... by a living and powerful Ministry in which she faithfully laboured, with unwearied Diligence both at Home and abroad for the space of Forty Years..."*