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Phillips DNA News

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Please submit news articles or ideas for articles to the editor. Questions about Genetic Genealogy can always be sent to the editor.

Project News

In 1885, a man named Albert M. Phillips wrote a genealogy book with this lengthy title: “Phillips Genealogies; including the family of George Phillips, First Minister of Watertown, Mass; Also the Families of Ebenezer Phillips of Southboro, Mass; Thomas Phillips of Duxbury, Mass; Thomas Phillips of Marshfield, Mass; John Phillips of Easton, Mass; James Phillips of Ipswich, Mass; with brief Genealogies of Walter Phillips of Damariscotta, ME; Andrew Phillips of Kittery, ME; Michael, Richard, Jeremy and Jeremiah Phillips of Rhode Island; and fragmentary records of early American Families of this name.” The entire book is available for reading online at this link:

http://www.archive.org/stream/phillipsgenealog00phil/phillipsgenealog00phil_djvu.txt

Like many other genealogists of his era, Albert appears to have thought all men named Phillips were probably related. He wrote the following in his introduction to his book:

It is now exceedingly difficult to establish the relation which existed between many of these earlier Phillippes or to trace out satisfactorily the several lines of their descendants. Of the family of Rev. George Phillips of Watertown, Mass., there have been at least ten generations. There may be some now of the eleventh, but if so, no notice of them has come to the writer. None of the first five generations are now living. The last one, probably, of the fifth generation died in 1865 at the great age of nearly 105 years. There are five divisions of this family so marked by long continued residence in particular localities that they might well be designated as distinctive branches. These are the Andover Branch, from Rev. Samuel Phillips who located in that town in 1711; the Boston Branch, from Hon. John Phillips who went there to live about 1718; the Brookhaven Branch, from Rev. Geo. Phillips who located in Brookhaven, Long Island, 1697; the Marblehead and Salem Branch, from Jonathan Phillips who removed from Watertown to Marblehead about 1719; the Oxford Branch, from Joseph Phillips who went there from Watertown not far from 1725. It will perhaps be noticed that the Christian name Samuel occurs in nearly every generation of the Andover branch; while in the Oxford branch there is an almost entire absence of either of the names Samuel, Sarah or William. Some members of each of these branches might have been found living in or near the several towns from which the respective branches take their names, at any time during the last one hundred and fifty to two hundred years.

Some of the earliest progenitors of the New England families of this name of which the line of descent has not been fully traced appear to have been the following:

Nicholas Phillips (Deacon) of Weymouth, 1640, seems to have had a large family, and a large number of the name at the present day are doubtless his descendants. The recurrence of such names as Joshua, Richard, Benjamin, Caleb and Experience, goes to show that one branch of his family removed to the vicinity of Dighton, Mass., at an early day. Some who have given the subject attention are of the opinion that part of those of the name in the early history of Rhode Island were his descendants.

John Phillips was of Duxbury and Marshfield, 1638 to 1677 or later and probably had a large number of descendants; but the statement on page 123 that his family appears to include those given under Nos. 70 to 89 is found to be incorrect so far as it relates to Capt. John Phillips of Easton, page 135, who came probably from Weymouth prior to the year 1700, and whose apparent age would place his birth not far from the year 1670, giving so much ground for believing that he may have been the son, born June 21, 1669, of Nicholas Phillips of Weymouth, page 192.

John Phillips (Col.) of Charlestown, about 1655, had a large family and numerous descendants.

William Phillips of Boston, 1640, had descendants living about one hundred years later.

Henry Phillips of Boston, 1640, afterwards of Dedham, had descendants in the vicinity of Boston more than one hundred years later and appears to have had a numerous progeny.

James Phillips of Taunton, son, probably, of William, 1643, of same place, had children born from 1661 to 1675.

Andrew Phillips of, or near, Charlestown, married prior to 1659, had descendants living more than sixty years later. A recurrence of several names would lead to the conclusion that he was the ancestor of Ebenezer Phillips of Southboro, page 97, whose origin is involved in mystery, but nothing as yet found goes to prove the connection.

Fast forward to the 21st century. Today, with the aid of Y-DNA testing, we can now establish whether or not all these different New England Phillips families shared a common paternal Phillips ancestor. The answer is no, although not all of them have been tested yet.

Several descendants of Rev. George Phillips of Watertown, Massachusetts, have gotten their Y-DNA tested and they belong to Phillips Family DNA Group 30. These include descendants of Rev. Samuel Phillips and Theophilus Phillips, both documented sons of Rev. George Phillips.

Several descendants of Deacon Nicholas Phillips of Weymouth, Massachusetts, have gotten their Y-DNA tested and they belong to Phillips Family DNA Group 18. Their Y-DNA is sufficiently

different enough from Group 30 so as to indicate these two groups do not share a common paternal Phillips ancestor within 1,000 years. The next article in this newsletter is a story about Henry Phillips who was a descendant of Deacon Nicholas Phillips of Massachusetts. Henry was involved in a famous sword duel that took place on Boston Common in July of 1728.

Several descendants of Ebenezer Phillips of Southborough in Worcester County, Massachusetts, have gotten their Y-DNA tested and they belong to Phillips Family DNA Group 72. The Y-DNA of Group 72 is sufficiently different enough from Group 18 and Group 30 so as to indicate these three Phillips families do not share a common paternal Phillips ancestor within 1,000 years.

Several descendants of Michael Phillips of Rhode Island have gotten their Y-DNA tested and they belong to Phillips Family DNA Group 11. Their Y-DNA is sufficiently different enough from that of Groups 18, 30 and 72 so as to indicate these four Phillips families do not share a common paternal ancestor within 1,000 years.

A descendant of Jeremiah Phillips of Providence, Rhode Island, joined the project and got his Y-DNA tested. He expected to match the Y-DNA of Group 11 but he did not. He now has several other matches in our Phillips DNA Project and belongs to Phillips Family DNA Group 36. It therefore appears Jeremiah Phillips of Rhode Island did not share a common paternal Phillips ancestor with Michael Phillips of Rhode Island within 1,000 years.

Featured Phillips Family Story

The First Duel On Boston Common

Compiled by John Buczek of Phillips Family DNA Group 18

Samuel Phillips, baptized in Boston 2 November 1662, died there 24 October 1720, was the son of Henry and Mary (Dwight) Phillips. Samuel was the well known bookseller of Boston, "at the Brick-shop at the West-End of the Town House."

The Town House as it looked in 1883



His son Henry graduated from Harvard College in 1724 and in July 1728 fought on the Common, "near the water-side", the first duel in Boston. His opponent, Benjamin Woodridge, son of Hon. Dudley Woodridge of Barbadoes, was killed. Phillips, aided by Peter Faneuil, whose sister Mary married Gillam Phillips, a brother of Henry, escaped on board the man-of-war, Sheerness, then lying in the harbor, and sailed immediately for La Rochell, France, where he died in the following year.



In Granary Burying Ground, at the left of the entrance and within a few feet of Tremont Street, stands the modest gravestone of Benjamin Woodbridge, erect in its place as when it first bore testimony to the love of bereaved parents.

What you the reader will find following are but a few pages regarding the incident. As I recall there are some 90 pages in all which were assembled over a period of several years.

By the Honourable WILLIAM DUMMER Esq; Lieut. Governour & Commander in Chief in & over His Majesties Province of the *Massachusetts Bay* in *New-England*.

A PROCLAMATION for Apprehending *Henry Phillips*.

W Hereas a barbarous Murder was last Night committed on the Body of Mr. Benjamin Woodbridge, a Young Gentleman Resident in the Town of Boston, and Henry Phillips of said Town is suspected to be the Author of the said Murder, and is now fled from Justice;

I Have therefore thought fit to Issue this Proclamation, hereby Commanding all Justices, Sheriffs, Constables, and all other Officers within this Province, and Requiring all others in His Majesties Name to use their utmost Endeavours that the said *Henry Phillips* may be apprehended and brought to Justice; And all Persons whatsoever are Commanded at their utmost Peril not to Harbour or Conceal him. The said *Henry Phillips* is a fair Young Man about the Age of Twenty-two Years, well set, and well dress'd, and has a Wound in one of his Hands.

Given at *Boston* the Fourth Day of *July* 1728. In the Second Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord *GEORGE* the Second, by the Grace of *GOD* of *Great Britain, France* and *Ireland*, KING, Defender of the Faith, &c.

By Order of the Honourable
the Lieut. Governour, *W. DUMMER*,
Josiah Willard, Secr.

G O D Save the KING.

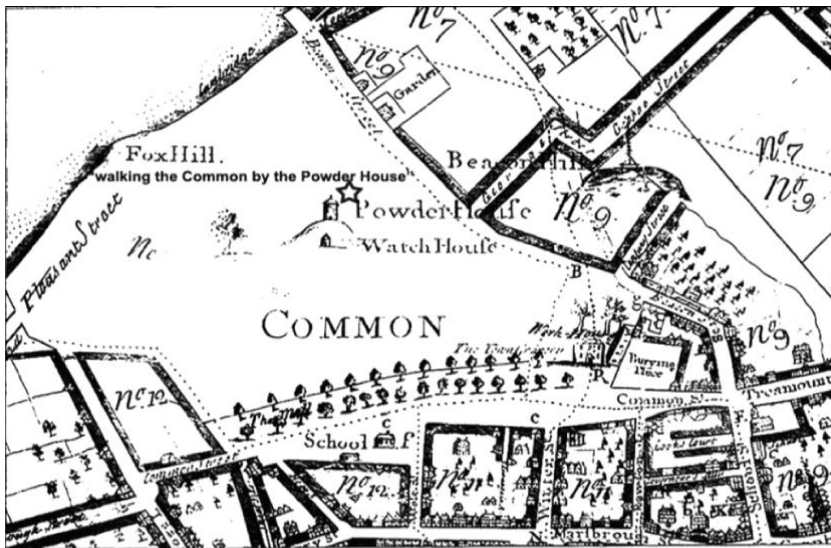
We are informed, that some days ago a Company of Workmen were raising a Bridge at *Norwich*, when a large piece of Timber fell which kill'd one of them immediately,

The above page is from the New England Journal 8 July 1792.

In the records of “Boston Deaths 1700 - 1790” the following can be found:

WOODBRIDGE Benjamin, 4 July 1728 merchant; “found Dead near the Powder House in the Common; He was stab’d in the right side, (as ‘tis thought in a Quarrel) a sword lying under his Head, (in a duel with Henry Phillips)”.

The following map drawn 1722 by Captain John Bonner depicts exactly where the duel was fought...*Of importance are the words contained in the above referenced record.... “found Dead near the Powder-House in the Common...*



The Royal Exchange Tavern was on the southwest corner of Exchange and State Streets and gave the name of Royal Exchange Lane to that thoroughfare. Shrimpton's Lane was an earlier name. This tavern certainly dates back to 1726 and was then kept by Luke Vardy listed as the first innkeeper of the Royal Exchange Tavern, established in 1726 at the southwest corner of State and Exchange Streets. His ownership may have lasted until 1747. The encounter between Henry Phillips and Benjamin Woodridge, which ended in a duel on the Boston Common, had its beginning in this house.

The following are but a few words regarding the duel as testified by various people.

From the book *“Dealings with the Dead by Lucius Manlius Sargent”* I find testimony of the incident as follows. There are many more pages but it is necessary to limit the amount.

LET us proceed with the examination, before Justice Elisha Cook, on the fourth of July, 1728.

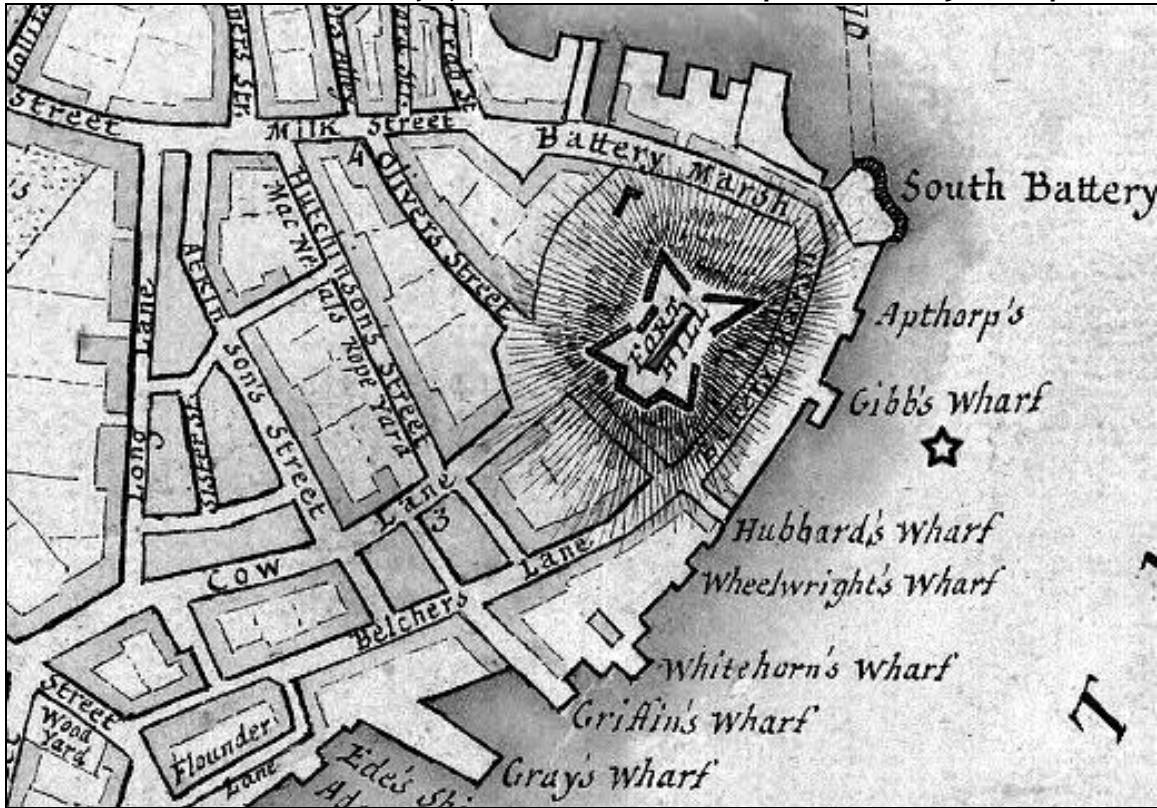
“John Cutler, of Boston, Chirurgeon, examined upon oath, saith, that, last evening, about seven, Dr. George Pemberton came to me, at Mrs. Mears’s, and informed, than an unhappy quarrel hapned betwene Mr. Henry Phillips and Benja. Woodbridge, and it was to be feared Mr. Woodbridge was desperately wounded. We went out. We soon mett Mr. Henry Phillips, who told us he feared he had killed Mr. Woodbridge, or mortally wounded him; that he left him at the bottom of the Common, and begged us to repaire there and see if any relief might be given him. Doct. Pemberton and I went, in compy with Mr. Henry Phillips, in search of said Woodbridge, but could not find him, nor make any discovery of the affair. Mr. Phillips left us. I bid him walk in Bromfield’s lane. We went to Mr. Woodbridge’s lodgings, and severall other houses, but heard nothing of him. Upon our return Mr. H. Phillips was at my house. I dresed his wound, which was across his belly and his fingers. Mr. Phillips shew a great concern and fear of having killed Mr. Woodbridge. I endeavored to appease him, and hope better things; but he said, could he think he was alive, he should think himself a happy man.”

“James Wood and John Brown, mariners, belonging to the Pink Molly, being examined upon oath, declare as above. John Brown cannot say, or knows not how many persons they took from the shore, at Gibb’s wharf, but is positive but two returned to Boston. They both say they cant be sure whether the Capt. went in the boat from the ship to the shoar.”

“Mr. Peter Faneuil examined saith, that, last evening, about twelve, he was with Gillam Phillips, Henry Phillips and Adam Tuck at Gibb’s wharf, and understood by Gillam Phillips, that his brother Henry had killed or mortally wounded Mr. Benja. Woodbridge this evening, that Henry Phillips went into Capt’n Winslow’s boat, with his brother and Adam Tuck with the Boat’s crew, where they went he knows not.”

Such was the evidence, presented before the examining justice, on the fourth of July, 1728, in relation to this painful, and extraordinary occurrence.

“We all went to Gib’s wharfe, that is Gillam Phillips and Henry Phillips....”



So ends much too briefly the story of “The First Duel On Boston Common.”