

THE HOLMES FAMILY

George Holmes came from Nazing Parish in Waltham of Essex, England, with his family in 1637 to the village of Roxbury in Massachusetts, near Boston. Their close friend was the Rev. John Eliot, also from Nazing, who had already become renowned as The Apostle through his efforts to Christianize the Indians. Roxbury got its name because of the natural surface which was uneven and rocky. It was the sixth town to be incorporated in Massachusetts- on September 28, 1630- and its settlers were mostly farmers- industrious and frugal. Due to the fact that money was scarce, the General Court ordered that corn pass in payment for debts. George Holmes was made Freeman May 22, 1639, had 252 acres and stood 10th in a list of 70 in the amount of property and there were 120 dwellings in the village which would accommodate about 700 souls. George was an ardent conservationist for his will of Dec. 18, 1645 reads "There shall not be strip and waste made of timber and firewood from my ground, only so much as may be for the necessary use of my family".

George's son Joseph was a constable, a very busy man- in King Philip's War, occupied in running boundaries, settling estates, collecting fines and arresting people for letting their cattle run wild. Joseph wanted to move to Boston, but one had to first be voted upon by the selectmen and vouched for by someone that he would not become a public charge.

Another son, Nathaniel, was active in public affairs, a selectman and a representative in the General Court. His profession was a "Bricklayer", he was also engaged as a "Fence viewer"- there were frequent disputes in the trespass of cattle. He was paid one shilling for buying rope and, for mending the meeting house doors, he received one shilling and sixpence, both paid in corn.

Then there was John who, with Obidiah Haws, was paid to fence in the burying place with a stone wall. It was a job well done-it contains the most ancient tombstone inscription in the U.S.-those at Jamestown not excepted-and is still in existence today-where the makers are peacefully buried.

John's son was Samuel Holmes, born 1675, who was active in the maintainance of the school. Some of the funeral customs of the day are brought to light in the provisions of his will that these are legitimate expenses for his burial services in 1725-

Paid for wine for the funeral	3 P(pounds)
" " sundry ^{or} wearing apparel	9P, 15 sh, 5d
" Mr. Benjamin Fitch for gloves	6P, 11 sh., 6d
" for 2 hats for young children	15 sh.
" for Drawing, Allowing, Registering this account	16 sh.

Later on the funeral expenses got to be so high the General Court enacted a law that no gloves(except 6 pairs to the bearers and one pair to the minister), no wine, rum, or rings to be given up-on penalty of 50 P.

Finally we come to Samuel's son, Nathaniel, and his son, Zephaniah, who fought in the Revolution and moved to Vermont. Zephaniah took part in the famous battle of Bennington and had a son, named Zephaniah also, following the family tradition. This Zeph made his way to Butler county, Kentucky and had a son called John by some and Zeph by others. John Zephaniah married and moved to Wayne County, Illinois and became the father of Louisa Holmes who married John J. Scott, my great-grandparents, who had a daughter, Florence, she married into the Graham family, had a daughter Florence, a granddaughter Florence and a great-granddaughter Florence. Now fascinating it is to have had ancestors and to dig out these precious bits of lore about them.