

Philip of French Ancestry?

In the "Records of First Church of Beverly, 1667-1772," may be read the following notation for March 4th, 1704-5: "Received to communion with us Philip Codie⁵¹ and his wife.⁵²" Plainly, by the fact that there is here no mention of baptism, confession of faith, or of "owning the covenant," we may logically conclude Philip and Martha had made "confession of faith" and had been baptized elsewhere as members of a sect holding tenets and beliefs essentially like those held by this Puritan Church of Beverly. And concluding as we have above, in the light of evidence from the records, that Philip and Martha had come quite directly from France to live at Beverly, we may in the light of history, reasonably claim they were members of that great Protestant following in France commonly called Huguenots.⁵³ There can indeed be no other conclusion, as we reflect upon what the various records tell us and indicate concerning our ancestor Philip, and Martha, his wife.

In the light of this conclusion and in the light of what history tells us of the more or less continual and relentless persecution of the Huguenot following by the French Government, for a period of years which include those of the youth⁵⁴ of Philip and Martha, it may reasonably be assumed that these years of their life were full of unhappy and distressing circumstances, from the burden and anguish of which they must eagerly have sought for a chance to escape. How this was accomplished we can only surmise as we read in the pages of history of the various ways by which the many others of the Huguenot following managed to escape from their native France to the hospitable shores of the new world.⁵⁵

That Philip as a Huguenot could have had little or no formal education seems likely in view of the fact reported by history that during the years, educational privileges were for the most part denied to the youth of the Huguenot following. It may easily be surmised that it was because of this deprivation that our Philip did not write his name, but signed with "his mark," the deeds to which he was party as grantor. But plainly, by this fact, we may not conclude that our Philip was without the general cultural attainment of his time. That he, and doubtless Martha, too, were proficient in reading may reasonably be assumed;

for, since it was a basic tenet of the Huguenot following that only by a personal reading and interpretation of the Bible can the way of life be known, it was, naturally, the earnest desire of Huguenot parents that their children should early learn to read. Accordingly, during the times when Huguenot children were forbidden the schools, they nevertheless for the most part learned to read, being commonly disciplined in this by their parents within the secrecy of whatever home these were permitted to maintain.

Moreover, as we know from the pages of history,⁵⁶ the Huguenot following from its early beginning sought to further education and during the times they were free from persecution they established schools of their own, not only for elementary education, but also for the higher disciplines and for the arts and crafts. And we learn that these schools were in operation, for at least a part of the time, during the years which must have been those of Philip's parent and grandparent generations. It seems reasonable, therefore, to assume that, though the youth of our Philip's generation were denied the privileges of formal education, they nevertheless must have gained much in the way of general knowledge, and cultural interest by contact with their parent generation which for the most part had had the educational advantage of attending the superior schools which had been fostered in their time by those of the Huguenot following in fulfillment of their exceptional educational interest.⁵⁷ That our Philip thus profited by this contact may be judged by the place he won for himself⁵⁸ in the new world in spite of the handicap of having to learn the language of the community to which he came⁵⁹ and also that of doubtless having been deprived⁶⁰ upon leaving France, of whatever material resources may have been his either by inheritance or by whatever calling he may have been permitted to pursue as a Huguenot youth in France.