

About Martha

In most of our records concerning Philip, his wife is named with him. By these records we know that her given name was Martha, but nowhere have we found mention of her family name. Since frequently in the Beverly church records⁹⁹ the family name of the wife is given, evidently by way of identifying her with her parental family, the fact that Martha's family name was not given suggests that to give it could serve no such purpose; this seems an added evidence for the conclusion above presented, that the marriage of Philip and Martha took place in the foreign land from which they had come.

But though our knowledge of Martha is chiefly what may be gained from records where she is merely mentioned as the wife of Philip, yet by what the records tell or indicate concerning Philip much may reasonably be surmised concerning her. By this it may be assumed that Martha, as well as Philip, was of the Huguenot following and that accordingly the years of her youth were also years of serious deprivation, if not of actual persecution. By these records too, it would seem that in the many years of their life together in the New World, Martha was in very fact a help-mate to Philip as he sought to establish a home under new conditions, and to provide for the welfare of their growing family.

That all but one¹⁰⁰ of their six children lived to years of full maturity argues well for the parental care they received.

That Martha had a large part in this is evident by the terms of Philip's will¹⁰¹ and also by his affectionate references there to "my beloved wife, Martha." To her he gives, as his will states, "all my personal estate of whatsoever kind—to her own use and improvement and support for and during the time of her natural life to dispose of as she shall think proper." Also to her "he gives his farm during her natural life." Moreover at the close of his will, saying "reposing all trust and fidelity in my beloved wife Martha," he names her with his son Thomas as an executor of his will.

That Martha may have had more educational opportunity than did Philip is suggested by the fact that upon one occasion she seems to have signed her name in her own hand. This was when she and her son Thomas, declaring themselves "physically unfit to assume the duties of executors" of Philip's¹⁰² will, petitioned to be excused in favor of Joseph, second son of Philip and Martha. Martha's signature here is plainly not written by Thomas whose signature is markedly different. With neither signature is there written "his mark," and it may reasonably be concluded that each signed in his own hand. But if Martha could thus write her signature, why did she sign with Philip by "her mark"? It may reasonably be surmised that she preferred to sign as he did in order not to appear in any way to be superior to him.

It seems by Hopkinton records that Martha outlived Philip by eleven years. The youngest son, Thomas, who did not marry, lived with her in the family home until his death, which occurred about four years after that of his father. John, the eldest son, who leased land at Hopkinton at the time his father did, came to live there when his children were still young. And though Joseph, the second son, lived for many years at Ipswich, he finally established a home at Hopkinton not long before his father's death. Isaac, the fourth son, died at Hopkinton a few years before his father's death, but his wife and two sons continued as residents there. Accordingly during the years of her widowhood, Martha must often have been cheered and comforted by the companionship of children and grandchildren.

Of the six children of Philip and Martha, all but one lived to years of maturity. Three married and had children; biographical mention of these will be found in their genealogical order. Of the other three, one died at twelve years of age. He was called Abraham, and was the third child.¹⁰³ In the Beverly church records his death is given as of date May 7th, 1714.¹⁰⁴ The date of Abraham's birth is given in the Beverly town-book¹⁰⁵ of that time, as September 21st, 1701, and the date of his baptism is given in the Beverly church records¹⁰⁶ as March 9th, 1706-7.

Of the other two who did not marry one was Thomas, the fifth¹⁰⁷ child, and the other was Mary, the sixth¹⁰⁸ child and only daughter of Philip and Martha.

In the Beverly town-book above mentioned the birth of Thomas is given as June 19th, 1707¹⁰⁹ and that of Mary as May 2, 1710.¹¹⁰ In the Beverly church record above noted, the baptism of Thomas with the surname written L(ec)ody (as elsewhere stated) is recorded of date March 5th, 1709-10,¹¹¹ and the baptism of Mary, with the surname written Lecody is recorded of date August 10th, 1712.¹¹²

Thomas lived but four years after his father's death, as we know by the date, 1747,¹¹³ at which his will was probated.¹¹⁴ By his will we know that Thomas was unmarried, and that he made his brother Joseph sole heir and administrator. That Thomas was a capable person may be judged by the fact that Philip named him with Martha as administrator of his will. While this choice of Thomas over the two older sons, John and Joseph, (Isaac had died) was quite likely due to the fact that Thomas was still living in the parental home, yet scarcely would this fact have decided his choice, had Philip not had the confidence in the ability of Thomas to perform such duty. But though mentally equal to this responsibility Thomas seems to have incurred a physical ailment which by the time of his father's death, four years after the will was written, led him to petition the court that he be relieved from serving as administrator of his father's will. This petition,¹¹⁵ of the date January 31st, 1743, and thus within a few days of Philip's death,¹¹⁶ was, as elsewhere noted, signed also by Martha, and they together asked that, the second son, Joseph, be appointed as administrator in their place, giving reason for this that they both suffered physical disability, one "by reason of age and great infirmity, and the other of us disabled in the use of his limbs."¹¹⁷ That Thomas continued in ill health thereafter seems evidenced by the fact that he lived but four years after the signing of this petition, as we know by the date, September 5th, 1747, at which his will¹¹⁸ was probated. By his will his brother Joseph became heir of whatever he possessed and is named administrator of his will. Judging by his signature¹¹⁹ it would seem that Thomas had had a fair education for his time and circumstances. In the town-book of Hopkinton for that time is a record that on July 1st, 1733, Thomas became a member¹²⁰ of the Hopkinton church. At this time judging by the date of his birth, he was in his twenty-fifth year.

Besides the two records above given concerning Mary, only daughter of Philip and Martha, a record giving date¹²¹ of her birth, and a record of her baptism,¹²² there is only one more, that of her becoming a communicant with the membership of the church at Hopkinton. This record in the Hopkinton town-book of that time is of date April 29th, 1732, at which time, by the date of her birth, she was twenty-two years of age. By the fact that Mary was not named in her father's will it is reasonable to assume that her death occurred before that of her father, and in fact before 1739, the date her father's will was written. On the light of this fact, and by the date of her becoming a communicant of the Hopkinton church we know that at the time of her death she had not reached beyond her twenty-ninth year and was possibly near her twenty-third year.