

HISTORY AND GENEALOGY OF THE

MILK - MILKS FAMILY

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CHAPTER I

DERIVATION OF NAME

MILK-MILKS

This surname has long been associated with the county of Norfolk, England, where it appears about twenty-two times in proportion to each 10,000 of the population of that county. There, throughout English history, it has been associated with small landowners.¹

The surname appears in England as "Melc" in Domesday or Domesday Book which was begun upon the order of William the Conqueror in 1080 and completed in 1086.²

The name Milk is variously stated to originate as follows: from German, Milich, Milke, and it is classified among personal names³; from Old Norse, Mylki, a rustic, one who milks, or likely a diminutive of Milo, Miles.⁴ Of still older derivation was the name Milk in use for Phoenician Gods, where it was used in a sense akin to that of Baal, Babylonian Bel, among those of Biblical allusion. These were not proper names, but a description of the deity as owner or mistress, and in the case of Milk, meaning king, lord, or mother.⁵ Thus, the name is of very ancient association.

The surname of Milk first appears on record in America in 1662 with mention of John Milk of Salem, Massachusetts, and the major portion of this book will deal with his progeny. Some of his descendants spell their name as Milk, whereas others, having added a final "s," spell their name as Milks.

JOHN MILK OF SALEM

On 7 April 1662, John Milk was appointed cowherd for the town of Salem, Mass. "The cows were sent to the common pasture, and a herdsman by the appropriate name of John Milk conducted the herd back and forth. . . ."⁶ The cattle were to be kept all summer for £ 20, one quarter of this to be paid in butter, one quarter in wheat, and the other half in Indian corn. During this same year, John Milk was chosen for the duty of chimney sweep, and his compensation was fixed at 4d. a chimney where cash was paid, or 6d. where payment was made in barter. On 1 Apr. 1677 John Milk was warned by Harry West to appear before worshipful Mayor Hawthorne to take the oath of allegiance.

¹Henry Brougham Guppy, History of Family Names in Great Britain (Edinburgh: 285, 523). ²Grose, Antiquities of England Wales. Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office, London. ³Henry Barber, British Family Names (London: 1894), p. 64. ⁴Ferguson, Patronymica Britannica. ⁵Encyclopaedia Britannica (11th ed.), 21:456. ⁶Salem in the 17th Century, Phillips, p. 213.

John Milk m. Sarah Wesson (Weston) in Apr. 1665, and to them the following chn. were b., 2:

- * 1. John Milk Jr., b. 8 Jan. 1668/9 at Salem.
- 2. Mary Milk, b. 22 Nov. 1670; m. John Wesson (Weston).

"Mr. Hale conveyed the John Milk lot to John Milk of Salem, Mass., Oct. 6, 1666. It is now nearly all included in Federal St. [opposite the tabernacle meeting house]. Mr. Milk built a house upon the lot, lived in it, and died possessed of the same in 1689. By his Will he devised the northern half of the lot and house to his son John, and the southern half of the lot and barn to his daughter Mary Milk, to be equally divided lengthwise. His widow Sarah lived in the house. John Wesson of Reading and wife Sarah, granddaughter of John Milk Sr., deceased, and probably daughter and heir of Mr. Milk's daughter Mary, conveyed the southern half to Joshua Hicks of Salem, shopkeeper, April 11, 1726. The northern half of the lot was conveyed by John Milk of Boston and James Milk of Falmouth, Me., shipwrights, sons and heirs of John Milk Jr., to Joshua Hicks, May 13, 1734. The old house apparently was then gone." (Reference: Essex Antiquarian 2:174.)

The Will of John Milk, dated 16 Mar. 1687/88, mentions wife Sarah, son John, and dau. Mary Milk; it appoints his wife and son executors. Witnesses were William Dounten, Rebecca Dounten, and William Smith. The Will was proved by the witnesses 26 Nov. 1689; inventory 1 July 1691 amounted to £ 71: 2s: 1d. (Reference: Essex Institute Hist. Collections, 5:45.)

Additional references: Vital Records of Salem. Perley's History of Salem. Colonial Families of America, Babson, 6:188. Salem in the 17th Cent., Phillips, p. 316. Probate Court Records, Essex Co.: Inventories of estates of Samuel Archard, 17 Dec. 1667; and Nicholas Potter, 25 Oct. 1677.

JOHN MILK JR. (1668/69)

John Milk Jr., shipwright, b. 8 Jan. 1668/69; m. (1) 20 Aug. 1689, at Marblehead, Mass., Elizabeth Hempfield, dau. of Edmund Hempfield of Salem; m. (2) 30 Oct. 1707, at Boston, Mary Scolly (Scolby), who subsequently m. Francis Hudson in 1720. A description of the John Milk home in Boston is given on the following page.

Chn. of 1st m., 2:

- 1. John Milk, b. abt. 1690, d. y.
- * 2. Job Milk, b. abt. 1694; m. Abigail Davol.

Chn. of 2nd m., 3:

- * 3. John Milk III, b. 23 June 1708/9; m. Jane Marvin (Marvel).
- * 4. James Milk, b. 31 Jan. 1710/11; m. (1) Sarah Brown; m. (2) Mrs. Mollie Deering.
- 5. Mary Jane Milk, b. abt. 1713.

References: Colonial Families of America, Babson, 6:188. Vital Records of Marblehead, Mass. Vital Records of Boston. New England Hist. & Gen. Reg., 77.

across a little Square from the corner of Sun Court and Moon Street. At the present time a Knights of Columbus building and the Sacred Heart Italian Catholic Church occupy the approximate location of the Milk property. Located on the crest level of a long, gradually sloping hill, the Milk home at one time must have commanded an excellent view of the ocean.

Haymarket is near, with its streets full of venders of farm produce. A block north of the Milk home site is the Old North Church, in the tower of which lanterns were hung to warn Paul Revere of the approach of the British during the Revolution; "One if by land, two if by sea." To the southwest, some three blocks, is Faneuil Hall, known as the "Cradle of Liberty" and the scene of many fiery debates over events which led to the Revolutionary War. A short distance farther south, leading into Atlantic Avenue which borders the harbor, is "Milk Street," named after this early Bostonian--perhaps the street led to the site of his shipbuilding business.

About two blocks north of the Milk home site, overlooking the bay formed by the Charles River and the Atlantic Ocean, is Copp's Hill Burying Ground, where several of John Milk's descendants are interred. (The street below Copp's Hill is called Commercial, and it is literally that, for it carries the heaviest of trucking for shipping by both rail and water.)

Many other historical sites are within a few blocks' distance. The City of Boston has dedicated "Freedom Trail," a route blazed with signposts and planned for a twenty-minute walk to some twelve historical points in the vicinity. Thus, the Milk home was situated in the heart of epic-making activities and witnessed, during its life span, the growth of a colonial nation into a democracy.

JOB MILK (1694)

Job Milk, b. abt. 1694 (son of John 1668/69); m. by Richard Billings, Justice, 12 July 1719, at Little Compton, R.I., to Abigail Davol, dau. of Jonathan and Hannah (Audley) Davol. Jonathan Davol was a son of the emigrant William Davol (Devol). Hannah Audley (baptized Audlyn, 29th day of 8th mo. 1643, Boston, aged about 8 days, dau. of John Audley, Boston) was prob. the dau. of John and Margaret Odlin (Audlin-Audley), armorer and cutler of Boston.

Little Compton, R.I., chosen by Job Milk for his home, is rolling land. To those who came from Boston and its environs, as the first Quakers in America did, it was a Promised Land--a mild climate, fertile soil, and a refuge from the persecutions of Plymouth. "'Aquidneck, Isle of Peace,' so the red men called Rhode Island; and a place of peace it proved to be for the persecuted settlers who found sanctuary upon it." (Maude Howe Elliott) From the hills one gains a fine view of the pretty farms and pastures. Eastward are the lowlands, necks, and "salt rivers." In summer the early settlers cut hay on the farthest points of land and brought it up the salt rivers to their farms by boats and barges. So much hay was transported that it caused controversy among local authorities.

Land holdings of Job Milk in Dartmouth indicate he may have been a "proprietor" there. He probably bought Rights before embarking at Boston for the then frontier. Although a Will of his father's has not been found, it is probable that he was given a sum of money for that purpose.

Dartmouth was an extension of Plymouth Colony to the Narragansett Bay. The settlers of the "Acoaxet" section of Old Dartmouth (referring to Westport, Little Compton, and Tiverton) were of two classes: the administrators for the

Rights of the land and their followers the from Plymouth; and the Quakers from the Island of Rhode Island (including Portsmouth and Newport) who were the earliest settlers, having bought their land from the Indians, who had the country well occupied. (Among these early comers were the following families: Davol, Fish, Brownell, Gifford, Sisson, Mosher, Tripp, Lawton, etc. Reference: Austin's Gen. Dict. of R.I.)

It is probable that Job Milk came with the Plymouth group. He was not among those who came from the Island of Rhode Island. marriage with Abigail Davol in 1719 is evidence that he soon chose early Island Quakers as friends and neighbors. Likewise, his descendants intermarried with descendants of these early comers, as the following pages reveal.

"The history of Old Dartmouth is the history of Quakers. . . . The conflict between the Pilgrims and Quakers in ancient Dartmouth, where the latter were largely in the majority, was not paralleled in any other locality in New England." (From Old Dartmouth: Historical Sketches, issued by the New Bedford Hist. Soc.) Although a record has never been found specifying that Job Milk and his were Quakers, their association with and acceptance by Quakers would imply their membership.

The following accounts of land transfers are given to show extent of Job Milk's holdings in Dartmouth, the nature of the land, and who were some of his neighbors. (Reference: Land Records, Taunton, Bristol Co., Mass.¹)

1732. Job Milk of Dartmouth, yeoman, £ 28, sells to Zacheus Toby, 29 acres in Dartmouth. Wit's Wm. Allen, Stephen West. (Vol. p. 149)

1740. Benjamin Wait of Dartmouth to Job Milk of Dartmouth and Thos. Pell of Rochester, £ 25, 13s, 2 1/3 acres, Cedar Swamp in Dartmouth in Paschachast Cedar Swamp, bounded on N. by sd. Job Milk, E. on sd. Job Milk upland, S. on Jos. Tripp's Cedar Swamp, W. on Chase's land. (Vol. 28, p. 339).

4 May 1750. Job Milk of Dartmouth to William Read, merchant of Newport, 100 acres in Dartmouth, it being Job Milk's homestead adjoining Enos Gifford and other lands of sd. Job Milk, £ 400. (Vol. p. 468)

1752. Job Milk of Dartmouth and Abigail Milk, his wife, to Ezekial Chase of Dartmouth, 6 acre Lot of Cedar Swamp in Dartmouth, "northerly part of Leander's Swamp conveyed to me by John Tripp, to me and Richard Sisson equal shares." Wits. Judah Chase, Abigail Milk. (Vol. 46, p. 314)

20 Oct. 1752. Job Milk of Dartmouth to Samuel Borden of Tiverton, "Homestead farm in Dartmouth where I and my son Jonathan Milk now liveth . . . £ 2000 . . . North boundary, the Line between Dartmouth and that part of Tiverton which hath of late been annexed to Freetown. West boundary, Peschachat Cedar Swamp. South, middle of Hemlock Gutter. East, Undivided land. Another tract of land bought of John Earl. Another tract of Cedar Swamp bought of Benj. Wait and Thos. Pell . . . and Sixty-three acres I bought of Daniel Davol and he bought it of Enos Gifford." (Vol. 70, p. 533).

¹Taunton was the "capital" of Dartmouth, and the ancient records of Old Dartmouth may be found there. The Taunton River brings ocean-going ships to its ports and very early Quaker refugees and Plymouth land-seekers thus found their way to Taunton.

Job Milk may have had lumber interests in the hemlock and cedar tracts of land mentioned in his Deeds. (Much of the land is now abandoned and growing up into woods again.)

The year 1742 marks the beginning of the Quaker migration from Old Dartmouth to Quaker Hill, Dutchess Co., N.Y. It is recorded that Phineas Chase (neighbor of Job Milk in Dartmouth and later in Dutchess Co.) was a Quaker and that he was a member of the "Oblong Monthly Meeting" (Quaker Hill Mt.) in 1742. (New England Hist. & Gen. Reg., 87:133).

The farmers who lived on the salt waters of southwestern Massachusetts were experienced seamen and water was their preferred route of travel. The voyage through Long Island Sound from Newport to the Hudson River was beautiful, and, no doubt, Job Milk and his Quaker friends early discovered that business might be combined with pleasure.

It took a period of years to establish themselves in their new home in Dutchess Co., N.Y. Job Milk did not close out his holdings in Dartmouth until 1752,¹ although we find his name on the Tax List in Dutchess Co., N.Y., as early as 1746, when it appears at Beekman. His daughter Sarah, wife of Seth Chase, was living there at that time. Likewise, several of Job's former neighbors preceded him to Beekman.² In 1756 Job Milk appears at Crom Elbow township and later he is listed at Amenia (Amenia, from Latin signifying "pleasant," was a township divided from Beekman).

At the first town meeting of Amenia in 1762, when the township was organized, Job Milk was chosen one of the overseers of highways. In 1772 Job Milk was chosen one of the overseers of the poor who were "to serve for nothing."

Daniel Merritt kept a store at Quaker Hill and in 1771 Job Milk's name is among those having accounts. It was the custom in those days of barter to straighten out accounts by suits in the courts--to make equitable adjustment. These suits did not imply an unwillingness to pay a debt. In a suit against Thomas Beadle, later founder of Beadle Hill or Easton, one of the jurors (1765) was Job Milk.

The title of the farm owned by Job Milk when an early settler in Beekman, probably was transferred to his grandson in 1774 or 1775 and was the farm sold by the latter in 1796. The name of Job Milk's widow listed on the tax list in 1778 enables us to calculate the date of his decease. He lived to a good age and may have remarried.

Chn. b. to Job and Abigail Milk at Dartmouth, Mass., 9:

- * 1. David Milk, b. 3 May 1720; m. Rebecca Lawton (See Chap. II).
- 2. Desire Milk, b. 21 June 1721, d. 11 May 1725.
- * 3. Sarah Milk, b. 17 Apr. 1723; m. Seth Chase (See Chap. III).
- * 4. Job Milk Jr., b. 17 Apr. 1725; m. Amy Fish (See Chap. IV).
- 5. Keziah Milk, b. 8 Dec. 1726, d. 13 May 1727.
- * 6. Jonathan Milk, b. 9 Mar. 1728; m. Mercy Trowbridge (See Chap. V).

¹Edith (Burchard) Darling, 3rd-great granddaughter of Job Milk, remembered the year of 1752 as an important date in Milk family tradition. Undoubtedly this referred not to the date of their migration from England, as she recalled, but rather to the date of their removal from Old Dartmouth to Dutchess Co.

²These former neighbors included James and Mary (Davol) Mosher, Hugh and Sarah (Davol) Mosher, George and Elizabeth (Davol) Brownell, and Benjamin Davol (Devol-Deuel).

- * 7. Abigail Milk, b. 1730-35; m. Nathan Chase (See Chap. III).
- 8. Mary Milk.
- 9. Elizabeth Milk.

References: Austin's Genealogical Dict. of R.I., p. 287. Additions and Corrections to Austin's Gen. Dict. of R.I., by A. Andres Moriarity. American Genealogist, Oct. 1950, p. 228. Magazine of New England, Vol. 3, p. 211. Tax Records, Adriance Library, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Land Records, Taunton, Bristol Co., Mass.

JOHN MILK III (1708/9)

John Milk III, shipwright, b. 23 June 1708/9, in Boston (son of John 1668/69); m. 3 Feb. 1731, Jane Marvin (Marvel) of Boston. He d. 19 May 1756 and is buried in old Copp's Hill Burying Ground, Boston. "On the highest point of the hill is a stone bearing the name John Milk, for whom Milk Street is named."¹ The inscription on his tombstone reads:

Here
Lies Ye Body of Mr. John Milk
died May 19th 1756
Aged 47 yrs., 10 mos., 27 days

Copp's Hill Burying Ground (see map of northeastern Boston, p. 5), named after its original owner, William Copp, is at the summit of a long hill that slopes toward the ocean. It is surrounded by an iron fence placed on top of a low stone wall, and is fairly well cared for. Many tombstones have been taken from their rightful places and are now leaning against the stone wall outlining the cemetery. Other stones are placed in borders along the main path. Such is the case of two Milk stones, one placed on each side of the main path, opposite each other. To keep them from falling, as have so many other monuments, the Milk stones have been imbedded deeper in the ground, so that one now cannot read the full inscriptions. In Copp's Hill are the graves of many men whose names are linked with Boston's history.

Chn. of John Milk III, b. in Boston, 4:

1. John Milk, b. 4 Dec. 1732; m. 4 Dec. 1763, at Boston, Susannah Browne. Chn., 2:
 - * (1) John Milk, b. 1765, Boston; m. 1790, Eleanor Boden.
 - (2) Elizabeth (Betsey) Milk; m. 9 Mar. 1784, Thomas Christy.
2. James Milk, b. 7 Mar. 1734.
3. Mary Milk, b. 25 Mar. 1737; m. 1 Dec. 1756, Levi Drew.
4. Jane Milk, b. 16 Sept. 1739; m. 23 Mar. 1761, Edward Burbeck, b. 1738-40, son of Edward and Martha (Shute) Burbeck, was a member of the Boston Tea Party, a Capt. in Col. Richard Gridley's Artillery Reg. On his return he located in Newburyport, Mass., where he was killed by lightning 23 June 1782. Chn., 3:
 - (1) James Burbeck, b. 15 Jan. 1763, Boston.
 - (2) Jane Burbeck; m. Ebenezer Little. Jane d. 29 Apr. 1845.
 - (3) William Burbeck, b. 3 Aug. 1771.

¹Milk Street was named after his father. Reference: Colonial Families of America, Babson, 6:188. See map of northeastern Boston, p. 5.