

CHAPTER 4
GENEALOGY OF THE FAMILY OF
RUTH PHELPS CASE
and
EARLY HISTORY OF MASSACHUSETTS AND CONNECTICUT

Introduction

It is interesting that the immigrant members of three of the families that were related to the Taylor family first arrived in the New World within the span of ten years, all apparently arriving first in Boston Harbor. These individuals were William Phelps in 1630, William Manning in about 1634, and Richard Case probably a year or two before 1640. It will be instructive to briefly describe the conditions leading to and occurring after their arrival.

Colonial Massachusetts and Connecticut

The settlement of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and its offspring, the Connecticut Colony, was a product of the persecution in England, of the Puritans (also called Nonconformists). They were part of a religious revisionist movement that started in the time of Queen Elizabeth I and that was found also in Switzerland and the Netherlands. They believed in the need to reform the Church of England so that it would revert back to a form close to that of the earliest Christians. This led Charles I, at the urging of Bishop Laud, to oust Puritan clergy from the Church of England, and to remove all Puritans from the universities.

A meeting of Puritan leaders in August of 1629 at Cambridge University, resulted in their taking over an existing colonial trading grant that had founded and settled Salem in 1628. This original grant was converted to a royal charter as the "Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England." The terms of the charter did not restrict the place where the stockholders must meet, and the founders were able to obtain permission to transfer the charter organization to New England where it was no longer subject to royal confiscation, or parliamentary oversight. The stockholders voted for the transfer and elected John Winthrop governor. Many families sold both land and goods, and during the first six months of 1630 fifteen ships, carrying over 1000 men, women, and children, cleared from English ports for Massachusetts. The movement gathered force as Bishop Laud put the screws to the Puritans, until by 1634 some 10,000 of them had settled in New England.

The historian, Samuel Morison^{<1>}, observed:

"These immigrants, organized in neighborhood groups and led by their ejected pastors, made several settlements around Boston. [For a generation the fur trade was important, especially on the Connecticut river, while fisheries were organized at Marblehead which found a market for dried codfish.] But for several years the main business of the

1. **Samuel Eliot Morison**, "The Oxford History of the American People", Oxford University Press, New York, 1965, p.61-74.

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Massachusetts Bay Colony was raising cattle, corn, and other foodstuffs to sell to newcomers who came supplied with money and goods. The Puritans' connections with London merchants, who extended credit to their friends overseas, were essential to sustain a colony that doubled its population every year."

"This system ended in 1637 when the Puritan migration stopped, owing to the troubles that heralded the English Civil War. Puritans now hoped to prevail at home, as indeed they did. This occasioned the first major American depression ... which forced the Puritans to look around for other means of livelihood. These were found through shipbuilding and the West Indies trade ... [where] there was a great demand for New England products--dried fish, salt beef and port, ground vegetables, poultry, even horses--and for ships to transport them. By selling these in the West Indies, the New Englanders obtained a balance to buy goods in England ... This West Indies trade was the main factor in New England prosperity until the American Revolution; without it the settlements on the northern coast would have remained stationary or declined."

Dorchester (where William Phelps settled), Cambridge (where William Manning settled) and Watertown were all established in that first summer of 1630, and were recognized by the General Court of the Bay Colony on 7 Sep 1630. The first settlers of Dorchester (which included the Phelps family), were part of a special delegation of the western counties [of England]--the people of Bristol, Plymouth, Poole, Weymouth, Exeter and Dorchester. They had been familiar with the New England fisheries and fur trade for years before the settlement of Massachusetts Bay. Mr. White of Dorsetshire, recruited a company of settlers that would constitute a self-contained community. It included two ministers, Mr. Maverick and Mr. Warham, of a church that was organized before leaving. They sailed from Plymouth, England, 20 Mar 1630 aboard a large ship of 400 tons, the *Mary and John*, commanded by Captain Squeb, with one hundred and forty passengers <2>.

"The ship...landed at Nantasket, now Hull, Massachusetts., 30 May 1630. After some delay in searching for a safe landing place, the company eventually was set ashore at Dorchester. By late summer, the settlers set about laying out their town-plot and distributing the lots according to direction of the General Court in London. In addition to feeding the cattle they had brought with them on the ship in the salt marshes around Dorchester, the settlers also learned to fish very profitably in the Bay." <3>

In this way, they founded Dorchester, Massachusetts, which claims the honor of being the first town in the Massachusetts Colony to organize a town government. Moreover,

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2. **Charles Edward Banks**, "The Winthrop Fleet of 1630, an Account of the Vessels, the Voyage, the Passengers and their English Homes from Original Authorities", published by Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, 1976, p.100-105, Appendix B, Passengers of the *Mary and John* in 1630.
A tentative list of passengers was compiled, accounting for 134 out of the 140 passengers on board. George Phelps is listed with no family. William Phelps is listed with 6 in his family.
 3. **Ebenezer Clapp, Jr.**, "History of the Town of Dorchester, Massachusetts", published by Committee of the Dorchester Antiquarian and Historical Society, Boston, 1859, p.35.

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because the Dorchester church had been organized in Plymouth before their embarkation, it consequently was granted seniority among the Bay Churches.

The new communities quickly expanded to the point where many of their inhabitants developed the feeling described by Cotton Mather who said--"Massachusetts soon became like a hive overstocked with bees, and many thought of swarming into new plantations."

In 1633, the people of Dorchester became aware of the rich bottom lands of the Connecticut River . The labor of clearing their rocky fields in Dorchester made Connecticut an attractive place by comparison. In addition, a large quantity of valuable furs had reached the Bay from the River Indians, and many of the Dorchester people were engaged in the fur business. In the spring of 1635, the Government reluctantly authorized a settlement in Connecticut. In the spring of 1636, a large group led by Mr. Warham, the minister, moved to the new settlement of Windsor, Connecticut. In time, nearly one half of the population of Dorchester (at that time only 5000-6000 people) moved to Windsor, including a large part of the intelligence and wealth which accompanied the first comers.

Besides Windsor, the companion towns of Hartford and Wethersfield were founded by families who moved from Cambridge (originally called Newtowne), and Watertown respectively. Hartford was also named Newtown at first, but its name was changed in February 1636/7. These towns, along with others that sprang up in the years after, combined to form Hartford County in 1666. The settlers brought with them a commission from the general court of Massachusetts, but found themselves beyond its jurisdiction. Thereupon they formed themselves into a voluntary association for the purpose of establishing government, and of purchasing the land from the Indians. The land bought from the Indians was divided among those who paid money into a common fund established for this purpose. It was at the second such division of common land in March 1640/1 that a Thomas Case (see Chapter 3) was given two acres in Hartford⁴.

"The transfer of the Massachusetts Bay charter from London to Boston ... made the colony virtually independent of England. There was no royal governor or judge, no English army garrison, no parliamentary agent; nothing to keep it in line with English colonial policy. And the form that this colonial government took, following the terms of the charter, became the standard American pattern. As a business charter, the corporation consisted of freemen (stockholders), meeting in an assembly called the general court where were annually elected, on a stated date, the governor, deputy governor, and assistants (councillors). But transfer overseas turned the company into a colonial government. The freemen were now the voters, the governor and deputy governor the two chief magistrates, and the assistants doubled as governor's council and supreme court ... The franchise was confined to church members in good standing; but this excluded very few adult men, and the annual election of all officials made the government responsible to the people ... And a further check on autocracy was established by a body of laws and a bill of

4. **Joseph O. Goodwin**, "East Hartford: Its History and Traditions", The Raymond Library Company, East Hartford, CT, 1976, p.38-43.

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rights. Winthrop and his elected assistants, who also served as judges, liked to pass judgments based on their own intuition and the Bible. The people observed that this allowed too much discretion to the judges. Hence the Massachusetts "Body of Liberties" adopted in 1641, and the "General Fundamentals" of Plymouth Colony, contained the classic safeguards of English liberty, such as jury trial, no taxation without representation, free elections, nobody to be deprived of life, liberty, or property save by due process of law, or compelled to incriminate himself⁵.

Two years after the Connecticut river migration, a company of London Puritans chose New Haven as a likely site for a trading city. In 1639 a written constitution--The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut and of New Haven--was drawn up by representatives from the two Connecticut colonies, providing representative governments which served them well until 1662, when Charles II combined them under a corporate charter as the Colony of Connecticut.

First Generation, Phelps Family

The genealogy of the Phelps family has been taken from the compilation by Oliver S. Phelps, "**The Phelps Family in America and Their English Ancestors**"⁶. Overall, the reliability of this family history is good, but occasionally there are omissions or statements that vary from other documents. Where this occurs, the discrepancy is noted below. Because of the prominence of William Phelps in the early life of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the Connecticut Colony, there are many references to him in various historical documents or compilations. Only a sampling of these references are included here, and only the direct line of descent is shown for William Phelps to Ruth Phelps, wife of Jonah Case Jr. of Goshen, Connecticut, and Addison, Vermont (*see #5, Chapter 3, Case Family History*).

1. William Phelps, Immigrant [14]*

- baptized 19 Aug 1599, Tewkesbury Abbey Church, Gloucestershire, England
- married (1) in England to **Anne (?)** --?--,
 - died 1635, Dorchester, Massachusetts.
- married (2) in Windsor, Connecticut, to **Mary Dover**,
 - died 27 Nov 1675, Windsor, Hartford County, Connecticut.
- William died 14 Jul 1672, Windsor, Hartford County, Connecticut.

Children of William and his first wife (Anne?):

- i **Richard Phelps**, born Tewkesbury, baptized 26 Dec 1619.
- ii **William Phelps**, born England about 1620, married (1) **Isabel Williamson**,

5. **Morison**, *Op. cit.*, p. 64-67.

6. **Oliver S. Phelps** and **Andrew T. Servin**, "The Phelps Family in America and Their English Ancestors", Vol I, Eagle Publishing Co., Pittsfield, MA 1899. (Full text available online) The genealogy of William and his descendants begins on p.72.

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(2) Sarah Pinney.

- iii **Sarah Phelps**, born England about 1623, married **William Wade**.
- iv **Samuel Phelps**, born England about 1625, married **Sarah Griswold**.
- v **Nathaniel Phelps**, born England about 1627, married **Elizabeth Copley**.
- 2 vi **Joseph Phelps**, born England about 1629, married (1) **Hannah Newton**, (2) **Mary Salmon**.

Children of William and Mary Dover:

- vii **Timothy Phelps**, born 1 Sep 1637, Windsor, Connecticut
- viii **Mary Phelps**, born 2 Mar 1644, Windsor, Connecticut, married **Thomas Barber**. (Grandson Thomas Barber, married Mercy Case, daughter of Samuel Case).

*For convenience in referencing, the number assigned in the Phelps & Sevin book is shown in brackets.

William was a son of William Phelps Sr. and Dorothy Phelps. There is no record in Tewkesbury of the name of his first wife or the date of their marriage. Soon after the birth of William's son, Richard, (and the death of his father) William probably moved to one of the southern counties, either Somerset or Dorsetshire. "We find no further reference to him in Tewkesbury, nor do we find any record of the birth of his five other children."

William, his family, and brother George, then unmarried, emigrated to New England aboard the *Mary and John*^{<7>}. The passenger listings do not include William's sons, Richard and Joseph, but one of them gives his wife's name as Anne, and the four children who accompanied him as William, Sarah, Samuel, and Nathaniel.^{<8>} Why Richard and Joseph are not included is not clear.^{<9>}

William Phelps' name is found in a variety of documents in Dorchester during the years

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7. **Charles Edward Banks**, "The Winthrop Fleet of 1630, an Account of the Vessels, the Voyage, the Passengers and their English Homes from Original Authorities", published by Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, 1976, p.100-105, Appendix B, Passengers of the *Mary and John* in 1630.
A tentative list of passengers was compiled, accounting for 134 out of the 140 passengers on board. George Phelps is listed with no family. William Phelps is listed with 6 in his family.
 8. **Charles Edward Banks**, "The Planters of the Commonwealth, A Study of the Emigrants and Emigration in Colonial Times: to which are added Lists of Passengers to Boston and to the Bay Colony; the Ships which brought them; their English Homes, and the Places of their Settlement in Massachusetts, 1620 - 1640", by Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD, 1972, p. 87-91.
There is not a complete list of the 140 passengers, but it includes William Phelps (with his wife and four children), and George Phelps, William's brother.
 9. Richard Phelps' name is included in some documents as being present in Dorchester with no determination of relationship. He is also listed in the **Phelps Family** text as having sailed, unmarried, to Barbados rather than remaining in or going to New England. Richard would have been only 11 at the time his family left England, and it is doubtful that he would not have accompanied them.

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from 1630 to 1635. In the latter year his wife died. On 8 Oct 1633, William was among seven persons elected as the first selectmen of the town, with the duty of meeting every Monday morning to consider business relating to the inhabitants of the town. When a representative form of the General Court was established in May 1634, William Phelps, along with two others from Dorchester, was among twenty-four persons representing eight towns.<10>

When the Rev. Warham moved from Dorchester to settle Windsor, Connecticut, George Phelps, William's brother, probably accompanied the first group that moved in the fall of 1635. It is likely that William Phelps and his family did not move until the main migration took place in the spring of 1636.

"At the time [this migration to Windsor] was to be under the control of the Massachusetts Company, and a commission of seven persons was appointed to govern the new colony in Connecticut. For one year Mr. William Phelps was one of this commission. The first reference to William in Windsor is in April 1636 when the first session of the General Court was held. The town was called Dorchester at first, it was not until 21 Feb 1636/7 that the Court proclaimed: 'It is ordered ye plantation called Dorchester shall bee called Windsor.' In 1638, it was admitted that the Connecticut colony was out of the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts colony, and on 2 Jan 1639/1640, the people of Windsor, Wethersfield, and Hartford met in Hartford and adopted a constitution for the Connecticut colony. In the new colony, William Phelps held the office of magistrate from 1639-1643, 1645-1649, and 1656-1662."

William married his second wife, Mary Dover, in 1638. She was an English lady, one of the passengers on the ship, *Mary and John*, and was a member of the Dorchester and Windsor churches. William's will, dated 22 Apr 1660, 12 years before his death, left most of his property to his son Timothy, with specific sums of money to his sons William, Samuel, Nathaniel, and Joseph.<11>

Second Generation

Son of William and Anne Phelps

2. Joseph Phelps Sr [23]

- born about 1629 in England, or 1630, Dorchester, Suffolk County, Massachusetts<12>,

- married (1) 20 Sep 1660 to **Hannah Newton** (daughter of Roger Newton)

10. **Phelps & Sevin**, *Op. cit.*, p.32 - 34, 70 - 71.

11. *Ibid.*, p.83.

12. Joseph is the child of William that is missing from the listings of children that accompanied William to the New World. Although he is listed as being 55 years old at the time of his death in 1684, it is more likely that this age was wrong and that he was born in Dorchester in 1630, rather than in England in 1629.

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- (The Phelps Family book remarks that some authorities cite a date of marriage of 2 Sep 1660 which may have been the date of banns),
- died 1675, Simsbury, Hartford County, Connecticut,
- married (2) 9 Jan 1676 to **Mary Salmon** (widow of Thomas Salmon),
- died 16 Jan 1682/3.
- Joseph died 1684, Simsbury, Connecticut.

Children of Joseph and Hannah:

- 3 i **Joseph Phelps Jr.**, born 20 Aug 1667, Windsor, Connecticut.
- ii **Hannah Phelps**, born 2 Feb 1669, Windsor, Connecticut, died young.
- iii **William Phelps**, born May 1670, Simsbury, Connecticut, died 8 Oct 1689 (not married).
- iv **Sarah Phelps**, born May 1672, Simsbury, Connecticut, married **John Hill**.
- v **Timothy Phelps**, born 18 May 1679, Simsbury, Connecticut, married **Rachel Moore**.

Joseph and Mary had no children. In 1666, Joseph Phelps was one of the first to receive grants of land in Simsbury. He is found in a number of Simsbury references from then until his death in 1684, age 55. His will gives the ages of his surviving children <13>.

Third Generation

Son of Joseph and Hannah Phelps

3. **Joseph Phelps Jr.**, [41]

- born Windsor, Connecticut, 20 Aug 1667,
- married (1) **Mary Collier**, dau of Joseph and Elizabeth (Sanford) Collier,
- died 13 Mar 1697, Simsbury,
- married (2) **Sarah Case**, 9 Nov 1699, dau of John and Sarah (Spencer) Case,
- born 14 Aug 1676, Simsbury,
- died 2 May 1704, also Simsbury,
- married (3) **Mary Case**, (a widow), dau of Richard and Elizabeth Case,
- born 1669, Simsbury,

13. **Manwaring, Charles William**, "A Digest of the Early Connecticut Probate Records":

(a) "**Probate Records**", vol IV, 1677-1687, p. 347 [Will of]: Phelps, Joseph, Simsbury. Inventory dated 5 Mar 1683/4, by John Terry, Joshua Holcomb & John Case. Widow Mary, and children Joseph age 17, Hannah age 15, William age 13, Sarah age 11, and Timothy age 4. Court Record p.87, 6 Mar 1683/4: Court grants administration to the Widow, 6 pounds of the personal estate and 1/3 of the Real Estate during her natural life, and to the eldest son 22 pounds, and to the rest of the children 11 pounds each. Timothy Phelps, Thomas Barber and John Terry appointed to be Overseers.

(b) 28 Aug 1684: Widow Mary petitions court to the effect that when she married Joseph Phelps, she was a widow, and had been left an estate by her former husband that placed her in comfortable circumstances, and carried some 40-50 pounds of estate with her to her new husband. From her husband Joseph, she has been left only 6 pounds and 1/3 of the Land for life which will not yield more than 1 pounds per year which is not enough to support herself and her child Timothy. Mary requests the Court to allow more to her for the upbringing of the child. [No evidence given of the outcome of the plea.]

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- died 10 Sep 1757, Simsbury.

Children of Joseph and Mary Collier (all born Simsbury)

- i **Joseph Phelps**, born 9 Oct 1689, married (1) Rebecca North, (2) Hannah Clark.
- ii **Hannah Phelps**, born 25 Oct 1693, married Samuel Humphrey.
- iii **Mary Phelps**, born 17 Oct 1696, died unmarried 9 Jan 1713

Children of Joseph and Sarah Case (all born Simsbury)

- iv **Sarah Phelps**, born 11 Aug 1700, died 14 Jan 1702.
- v **Damaris Phelps**, born 5 Nov 1703, married John Hills.

Children of Joseph and Mary Case (all born Simsbury)

- vi **John Phelps**, born 14 Feb 1707, died 5 Jun 1713
- vii **Amos Phelps**, born 1708, married Sarah Pettibone.
- viii **Elizabeth Phelps**, born 7 Apr 1709, married Daniel Hoskins.
- 4 ix **David Phelps**, born 1710, married Abigail Pettibone.

Joseph settled in Simsbury, and was one of its most influential citizens. He held the office of Justice of the Peace for many years, and was elected to the General Assembly from 1709 to 1726.

Fourth Generation

Son of Joseph and Mary Case Phelps

4. Lt. **David Phelps** [144]

- born: Simsbury, 1710,
- married: 25 Apr 1731, **Abigail Pettibone** dau John and Mary (Buell) Pettibone, and sister of Sarah Pettibone who married David's brother Amos) (born Canton, died Simsbury, 1807),
- married (2) David Strong of Bolton, Connecticut

Children (all born in Simsbury):

- i **David Phelps**, born 7 May 1732, died 19 Jul 1732.
- ii **David Phelps**, born 26 Mar 1734, married Abigail Griswold.
- iii **Abigail Phelps**, born 5 Nov 1735, married (1) Edward Griswold, (2) Amasa Case.
- iv **Elisha Phelps**, born 17 Oct 1737, married Rosetta Owen.
- v **Noah Phelps**, born 22 Jan 1740, married Lydia Griswold.
- vi **Rachel Phelps**, born 10 Dec 1741, married David Humphrey.
- 5 vii **Ruth Phelps**, born 15 Sep 1743.
- viii **Sarah Phelps**, born 15 Oct 1745, married Elisha Hayden.
- ix **Susannah Phelps**, born 4 Jan 1748, married William Nash.
- x **Louise Phelps**, born 4 Mar 1750, married Samuel Hayden.

David was made a Freeman of Simsbury in 1734 and represented his town in the General

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Assembly several times. He was a Lieutenant in the militia, and served in the French and Indian War. He died of smallpox in Simsbury, 9 Dec 1760.

Fifth Generation

Daughter of David and Abigail Phelps

6*. Ruth Phelps [410]

- born 15 Sep 1743, Simsbury,
- married 23 Jun 1763, in Goshen, Litchfield County, Connecticut, to **Jonah Case Jr.**
(*see #5, Chapter 3, Case Family History*),
- Ruth died 24 Oct 1838, Middlebury, Addison County, Vermont.

The **Phelps Family** genealogy omits any reference to the Ruth Phelps that married Jonah Case Jr. The closest reference in the **Phelps Family** genealogy to a Ruth Phelps that married Jonah Case is the Ruth Phelps shown here. The Phelps records read "married Josiah Case, settled in Guilford, CT, and later in Vermont". The age is right and the names are sufficiently close, that we presume these are typographical errors introduced into the records at some time in the past and that the individuals are in fact Jonah Case and his wife Ruth of Goshen, Connecticut.

Other Phelps in Goshen

There were several Phelps family members in addition to Ruth Phelps that appear in Goshen records. The earliest was Abel Case who was one of the proprietors involved in establishing the town in 1738. He was a large land owner and active in town affairs until he moved to Norfolk, the next town north of Goshen in the 1750's. A third cousin, Benjamin Phelps was also in Goshen for a few years during its formative period but then left. All of the children of Abel and his second wife, Mary Pinnick were born in Goshen. The marriage of three of Abel's children, Abel Jr., Elkanah and Jerusha are included in Goshen town records.

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