

THE VARNUMS OF DRACUTT

A History of George Varnum, his son Samuel who came to Ipswich about 1635, and grandsons Thomas, John and Joseph who settled in Dracutt, and their descendants

HISTORY OF THE VARNUM FAMILY SINCE THEY FIRST CAME FROM ENGLAND TO AMERICA

Written by Squire Parker Varnum, fifth in descent from George the father of Samuel, Feb. 17, 1818, when he was 71 years of age.

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Edward Colbourne, referred to above, was one of the early settlers of Ipswich. He purchased the interest of Richard Shatswell, of Ipswich, who with Samuel Varnum bought the 1100 acres of land in "Drawcott upon the Merrimack" of John Evered, als. Webb. This joint interest led to the joining of the families in marriage, his son Ezra marrying the daughter of Samuel, and thus down to the present, the Dracut Varnums and Coburns are of commingled blood.

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His second son Thomas, who lived with his father, married Sarah Colbourn and died about one year after, leaving one son who was named Thomas. He inherited his father's estate and married Mary Atkinson, by whom he had five sons and four daughters, and died in the year 1805, aged 57 years. Mary, his wife, died Feb. 10, 1818, aged 56 years. Their children all lived upon the land that was their great great grandfather's.

John, the son born in Drawcott, married Dorothy Prescott of Groton, by whom he had four sons and three daughters. He died at about 46 years of age. The sons were John, Abraham, Jonas and James, of whom the first two settled in Drawcott. Jonas settled in Pepperell, James in Chester, N.H., all having posterity. John was one of Capt. Lovewell's men on his first excursion to the Northward of Winipisokee pond in winter on snow shoes, carrying their provisions on their backs. (In their march they found a bear, by the help of their dog, dened in a large hollow tree, which they killed; but were unable to get him out at the place where he had entered as he had grown so fat. In a few minutes they were roasting and eating him. He was very delicate). They met a party of nine Indians and a boy at said pond, whom they attacked and scalped. This happened the 20th day of February, 1724. They got into Dover the 24th.

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They then marched to Andover and were there entertained by Joseph Parker. It was there that John Varnum first met Phoebe Parker, whom he afterwards married and by whom he had thirteen children.

The said John Varnum died suddenly on the 26th day of July, 1785, aged eighty years and five months. The said Phoebe died the 31st of Jan., 1786, aged 74 years. Their first four children were daughters. Phoebe married Benjamin Poor; Lydia, Jacob Tyler; Susanna, Ebenezer Poor; Hannah, Benjamin Stevens, all of Andover. John, the first son, died of a fever at Crown Point in the year 1760, aged 21 years and 7 months, he being a Lieut. In the army in the war between the French and the English.

Dolly married Peter Coburn of Dracutt. They had one son, the mother dying soon after.

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James, the third son of said John Varnum, married Prudence Hildreth, of Dracutt, who died soon after, leaving one daughter. He lived seventeen years a widower, and then married Eleanor Bridges of Andover. By her he had two daughters; one died young, the other is now living (1818). After their mother's death he married widow Martha Adams, of Greenfield, N.H. The said James was five years in the Revolutionary War, four years as Capt. And afterwards as Colonel in the Militia.

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A company returning from ye old meadows in Dracutt were waylaid and fired upon by the Indians at the fordway, which is now called "Old Meadow Bridge." A tradition has it that some were killed and some wounded. One Joseph Varnum was pierced by several balls. Part of his gaul came out and was taken off; yet he recovered and lived many years." [Reminiscences of Dracutt in *Lowell Citizen*, 1859]

He had three sons, Joseph, Samuel and John. All three settled in Dracutt. The father, Joseph Varnum, was a Colonel of a troop of horse, and his two sons, Samuel and Joseph, were his Majors.

His eldest son, Maj. Joseph, was thrice married; to Rachel Goodhue; to Abiah Mitchell, of Haverhill, and finally to the widow Burns. By his second wife he had three sons: Bradley, Joseph and Ebenezer. The Hon. Joseph Bradley Varnum (Son of Samuel), for many years a member of the House of Representatives in Congress, and for many sessions its speaker, and Major Gen'l; of the third division of the Massachusetts Militia, is a descendant of this branch of the family.

The Compiler of these records takes this occasion to acknowledge gratefully his obligation to the memory of Squire Parker Varnum, the author of the above account, and to bear testimony to its remarkable accuracy. The following pages will show how research among the archives of the State of Massachusetts, as well as family records, has fortified every statement of his narrative. Without its invaluable aid this Varnum history might not have been successfully accomplished.

GEORGE VARNUM

George Varnum was among the earliest settlers of Ipswich, Massachusetts. He came over from England among the Puritan emigrants who early settled Salem and Ipswich, who are distinguished from the Pilgrims who settled at Plymouth. With him came his wife Hannah and their children, **Samuel** and Hannah, both young, **Samuel being about 16**, and Hannah being next in age.

The first record of his name appears in the Ipswich Town records in 1635. "Granted Phillip Fowler – Likewise 6 acres planting grounds on the hill next the town, having Christopher Osgood towards the north-west, and George Varnham south-east." Also in 1636 "Granted Phillip Fowler – also 6 acres of planting ground on the north side of the town, having a planting lot of George Varnham's on the south-east." Also in 1639 "Granted to Varnham 3 acres of that planting ground formerly Mr. Bradstreets, and the remainder of it to Jarwell Bird, to be laid out by the layers and Mary Symonds."

Phillip Fowler b. in England in 1590. Came to New England in 1634 in the "Mary and John" and settled in Ipswich. Died 24 June, 1678.

Among the files in the Probate office at Salem, written in the quaint script of the 17th Century, appears the following unsigned "Will of George Varnum" dated the "s1st of the 2nd month, 1649," which Will was admitted to Probate and an inventory filed of his estate: (Book 1, leaf 110)

I, George Varnam, of Ipswich being in perfect memorye doe ordayne this my last will and testament as followeth: first I give my house and bame and land and goods and chattels to my wife for hir life. And after hir decease two pts of all my estate to my sonne Samuel Varnam and the third part to my daughter Hannah, to be equally devided. And my meaning is, if my sonne dye without issue, my whole estate is to be returned to my daughter Hannah, and further so long as she remayne unmarried, she is to enjoye a chamber in my house, and I doe apoynte Thomas Scott and my sonn Samuel to be executors."

He must have passed away shortly after this testament, for there is filed "An inventory of ye goods and chattels of George Varnam of Ipswich, taken the 12th day of the 8th month, 1649."

| | | |
|---|------|-------|
| Imprimis, Halfe the dwelling house and barne and all the ground | 52 | 15 |
| Three coves | 14 | |
| Two oxen and a Shote | 12 | 15 |
| Halfe a cart a cheane a yoke and a halfe a share | 12 | |
| Four pewter dishes, a fwiing pan and the tramells | 16 | |
| For boding and some of his clothes and other things | 1 | 16 |
| For iron and chaines and other things | 1 | 16 |
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| For a matlock meale salt and other things | 08 | |
| Seed Corne | 13.6 | |
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There apopears in Ipswich-Salem records, Vol. V, p. 76, the following Deed of conveyance:

This witnesseth that I, Thomas French, of Ipswich, tailor, for and in consideration of 5L by me received have sould unto George Varnham ten acres of upland ground at Reedy marsh lying between the land of Mr. John Whittingham, Robert Day and Goodman Pearley....In witness whereof I have to these presents wet my hand the 1st of April, 1647

This property is mentioned in conveyances 1st day of 10th month, 1647 (V, 104), 28th Feb'y, 1653 (ii., p. 40) 16th May, 1644 (V. 144), and also referred to in deeds as bounding property belonging to Samuel Varnum, 3d Sept., 1652 (ii., p. 89), 4th Jan., 1663 (ii., p. 335), 29th May, 1665 (ii., p. 440), and as late Samuel Varnum's land, 12th June, 1665. (Salem Records) The Eastern Branch Boston & Maine R.R. now runs through this property.

SAMUEL VARNUM

Samuel Varnum, born in England about 1619, married Sarah, daughter of Roger and Goodie Langton, of Ipswich. Seven children:

1. George and Samuel, b. in Ipswich, Killed by Indians 18th of Mar., 1676, and buried near Merrimack Rover, opposite land of..
2. Thomas Varnum
3. Abraham, b. 28th of Oct., 1659, in Ipswich; d. Apr. 3, 1660
4. Hannah, b. 22d of May, 1661, in Ipswich. "Ezra, son of Edw. Colburn, and Hannah, daughter of Samuel Varnum, entered into a covenant of marriage 22d, 8th month, 1681, before Samuel Adams Commr." He was born in Ipswich, 16 March, 1657-8. The Edw. Colburn mentioned, purchased the interest of Richard Shatswellin the Evered-Webb purchase. He came in the "Defence" from London, 6 July, 1635, aged 17, and settled in Ipswich and later in Drawcott. He died 17 Feb., 1700. (Geo. A. Gordon)
 - i. Ezra, b. 1682, m. Lucy Nelson
 - ii. Samuel, b. 18 Sept. 1684; m. 1711 Mary Richardson

- iii. Abraham, b. 7 Aug. 1687
- iv. **John, b. 15 Apr., 1690**
- v. Hannah, b. 14 Aug., 1695
- vi. Sarah, b. 10 Apr., 1699
- 5. Thomas, b. 19th Nov., 1662, at Ipswich, m. Joanna Jewett
- 6. John, b. 15th Oct., 1669 at Chelmsford, m. Dorothy Prescott
- 7. Joseph, b. 15th Mar., 1672, at Chelmsford, m. (1) Ruth Jewett (2) Mary Barron

The early records of Middlesex Co. at East Cambridge contain many transfers of land to and between the Varnum Brothers, Thomas, John and Joseph. As they held much land in common, mention is made of only such parcels as were conveyed to them in severalty.

30th Nov., 1689, in ye first year of their Majesties' reign, King William and Queen Mary, Thomas Richardson, of Drawcutt, conveys to Samuel Varnum 8 acres of land lying on ye North side of ye Merrimack River, part of meddow land which wa sometime in ye possession of Capt. John Evered als. Webb Consideration 8L sterling in a very good and substantial horse.

18th Mar. 1692, Elizabeth relict of Capt. Wm. Bond, of Watertown, conveys to Thomas, John and Joseph Varnum 6 acres of land at Dubble Brook. Consideration 30L, lawful money of New England.

JOHN VARNUM

John Varnum (Samuel 2, George 1), born 25 Oct., 1669, died 23 Feb., 1715. "John Varnum of Dracutt and Dorothi Prescout of Groton, ware Lawfully mared in Nov., in the 13th day in the year 1700."

Thus in the script of John Varnum himself, the first town clerk, is the fact duly set forth.

Dorothy, born 16 Dec. 1681, was the daughter of Jonas and Mary (Loker) Prescott. The history of Groton, by Caleb Butler, tells an interesting story of the courtship of the parents of outlived her husband and in Oct., 1722, was represented by her agent in fixing the boundary line between her farm and that of Col. Joseph Varnum, her husband's brother. Five children:

- 1. Hannah, b. 26 Dec., 1791; d. 6 May, 1815
- 2. Sarah, b. 22 Apr., 1703; d. 26 Nov., 1742; m. 15 Aug., 1722
Robert Blood of Concord
- 3. John, b. 7, Feb. 1704-5; m. Phebe Parker
- 4. Martha, b. 6, July 1707; d. in infancy
- 5. Jonas, b. 10 May, 1710; m. Lydia Boyden
- 6. Abraham, b. May 10, 1710; m. (1) Abigail Hardy (2) Rachel ____;
(3) Rebecca Shead
- 7. James, b. 4 Sept., 1712; m. Abigail Dearborn
- 8. **Dorothy, b. 21 Aug., 1715**

Dorothy married David Shattuck and their daughter Dolly Shattuck b. 1731 married Josiah Wright on 1/24/1758 at Pepperell. Both died at Pepperell. [rcb]

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2. Thomas Varnum
3. Abraham, b. 28th of Oct., 1659, in Ipswich; d. Apr. 3, 1660
4. Hannah, b. 22d of May, 1661, in Ipswich. "Ezra, son of Edw. Colburn, and Hannah, daughter of Samuel Varnum, entered into a covenant of marriage 22d, 8th month, 1681, before Samuel Adams Commr." He was born in Ipswich, 16 March, 1657-8. The Edw. Colburn mentioned, purchased the interest of Richard Shatswellin the Evered-Webb purchase. He came in the "Defence" from London, 6 July, 1635, aged 17, and settled in Ipswich and later in Drawcott. He died 17 Feb., 1700. (Geo. A. Gordon)
 - i. Ezra, b. 1682, m. Lucy Nelson
 - ii. Samuel, b. 18 Sept. 1684; m. 1711 Mary Richardson

- iii. Abraham, b. 7 Aug. 1687
- iv. **John, b. 15 Apr., 1690**
- v. Hannah, b. 14 Aug., 1695
- vi. Sarah, b. 10 Apr., 1699
- 5. Thomas, b. 19th Nov., 1662, at Ipswich, m. Joanna Jewett
- 6. John, b. 15th Oct., 1669 at Chelmsford, m. Dorothy Prescott
- 7. Joseph, b. 15th Mar., 1672, at Chelmsford, m. (1) Ruth Jewett (2) Mary Barron

The early records of Middlesex Co. at East Cambridge contain many transfers of land to and between the Varnum Brothers, Thomas, John and Joseph. As they held much land in common, mention is made of only such parcels as were conveyed to them in severalty.

30th Nov., 1689, in ye first year of their Majesties' reign, King William and Queen Mary, Thomas Richardson, of Drawcutt, conveys to Samuel Varnum 8 acres of land lying on ye North side of ye Merrimack River, part of meddow land which wa sometime in ye possession of Capt. John Evered als. Webb Consideration 8L sterling in a very good and substantial horse.

18th Mar. 1692, Elizabeth relict of Capt. Wm. Bond, of Watertown, conveys to Thomas, John and Joseph Varnum 6 acres of land at Dubble Brook. Consideration 30L, lawful money of New England.

JOHN VARNUM

John Varnum (Samuel 2, George 1), born 25 Oct., 1669, died 23 Feb., 1715. "John Varnum of Dracutt and Dorothei Prescoute of Groton, ware Lawfully mared in Nov., in the 13th day in the year 1700."

Thus in the script of John Varnum himself, the first town clerk, is the fact duly set forth.

Dorothy, born 16 Dec. 1681, was the daughter of Jonas and Mary (Loker) Prescott. The history of Groton, by Caleb Butler, tells an interesting story of the courtship of the parents of outlived her husband and in Oct., 1722, was represented by her agent in fixing the boundary line between her farm and that of Col. Joseph Varnum, her husband's brother. Five children:

- 1. Hannah, b. 26 Dec., 1791; d. 6 May, 1815
- 2. Sarah, b. 22 Apr., 1703; d. 26 Nov., 1742; m. 15 Aug., 1722
Robert Blood of Concord
- 3. John, b. 7, Feb. 1704-5; m. Phebe Parker
- 4. Martha, b. 6, July 1707; d. in infancy
- 5. Jonas, b. 10 May, 1710; m. Lydia Boyden
- 6. Abraham, b. May 10, 1710; m. (1) Abigail Hardy (2) Rachel ____;
(3) Rebecca Shead
- 7. James, b. 4 Sept., 1712; m. Abigail Dearborn
- 8. **Dorothy, b. 21 Aug., 1715**

Dorothy married David Shattuck and their daughter Dolly Shattuck b. 1731 married Josiah Wright on 1/24/1758 at Pepperell. Both died at Pepperell. [rcb]