

George Felt
1601



Nathaniel H. Felt
1816

Ancestors and Descendants of George Felt who Settled in Salem, Massachusetts in 1628 with the Puritans

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Insert on John Endicott by Ernest W. Felt

GEORGE FELT — 1601

George Felt (or Felch, as the name is sometimes spelled¹ and originally written),² born 1601, in England,³ came from England to Salem, Massachusetts⁴ in 1628.⁵ He came to America, according to tradition, with Captain John Endicott (first Governor of Massachusetts). The family is supposed to have originated in Wales, but may have had a more remote Flemish or Dutch origin.⁶ Bank's *Topographical Dictionary* states that George

JOHN ENDICOTT — 1589-1665

It is thought by some historians that John Endicott was born in Chagford, Devonshire, England in 1589 and died in Boston March 15, 1665. Other historians say he was born at Dorchester, Dorchestershire in or about 1588.

On March 19, 1628 he joined with five other (Puritans) religious persons in purchasing a patent on the territory of Massachusetts Bay from the corporation styled the "counsel" established at Plymouth in the County Devon for the planting, ruling and governing of New England in America.

Almost immediately after the purchase he secured property rights in the "Dorchester Company" as it was called and appointed two men, Mathew Cradock and Roger Ludlow, who were related to him as his assistants. It is possible that Endicott was chosen because he was a "fit instrument to begin the wilderness work."

Anxious to go on his venture, he set sail June 20, 1628 toward America. He took his wife and some twenty or thirty emigrants with him and set sail on the "Abigail," reaching his destination in America Sept. 6, 1628, landing at Naumkeag, afterwards known as Salem.

"Little is known about Endicott's youth, but at an early age he was brought under the influence of the Puritan Divine Rev. John White of Dorchester, and the Rev. Samuel Skelton, later Pastor of the first church in Salem, Massachusetts.

Endicott and his Puritan counsel, viewed with no favorable eye the raising of tobacco," believing such a production, except for medicinal purposes, injurious both to the morals and health of the individual. Endicott was known as a "puritan of the Puritans."

George Felt was a sailor on his ship the "Abigail."

Dictionary of National Biography Vol. 6, page 784
Dictionary of American Biography Vol. 6, page 155

Felt immigrated from Bedfordshire County in England, his English parish name being Leighton/Buzzard.⁷ (1) Leighton Buzzard Peculiar At: County Record Office, Shire Hall, Bedfordshire County, Bedford, England. (2) Wills and Admons. (1537-1846) for Leighton Buzzard Peculiar among Berks: (Berkshire Record Office, Berkshire County, Reading, England) also among Bucks: (County Record Office, Buckinghamshire, Aylesbury, England) Also among Oxon: (County Record Office, Oxfordshire, Oxford, England). (3) Peculiars kept at the Bodleigh Library, Oxford, England. (A photocopy of the latter records are also at the County Record Office, Bedford). By occupation, George Felt was a mason.⁸

The following year, 1629, he moved to Charlestown, Massachusetts,⁹ the city then only being a year old.¹⁰ In a short period of four years, George Felt must have become one of its leading citizens, as in 1633, his name appears on an order along with thirty-two other inhabitants of Charlestown inaugurating a new form of government for Charlestown. "Public business at first was conducted in a General Convention of the people, but this method being unsatisfactory a new form of town government was inaugurated in conformity with an order under date of February 10, 1634-5, which was signed by thirty-three of the inhabitants, among them being George Felt."¹¹

In 1681, George Felt calls himself about 80 years of age and testifies that land was given him in that place (Charlestown, Massachusetts) "about 48 years since."¹²

In Charlestown, Massachusetts, he had a house lot granted him and other lands at various times. He evidently was a man of some consequences and fulfilled important offices in the town and church.¹³ His estate in Charlestown, Massachusetts is listed as follows:

"Had grant house plot and 4 acres of Menotomy, 1635-6. Grant 10 acres lot, No. 17. 5 to be given to Newcomers (1637). Possessions, 1638 (7 lots): (1) house, S.W. of Mill Hill-bd. N.E., crooked land; N.W., N. TRerice; S.E., B. Hubbard; S.W., Charles River. (2) 1 cow common. (3) 5 acres woods Mystic field—S., highway towards South River; N., woods; W., P. Wilkinson; E., R. Naylie. (4) ½ acres Mystic marshes—S., G. Bunker; W., North River; N., W. Dade. (5) 5 acres wood—N.E., N. Stowars; S.W., R. Palgrave; N.W., P. Drink-er; S.E., R. Morrice. (6) 15 acres woods—N.E., A. Palmer, J. Matthews; S.W., E. Convers; N.W., T. Lynde; S.E., J. Temberton. (7) 38 acres Waterfield—N.W., F. Norton; S.E.,

⁷ Charles, Banks, *Topographical Dictionary of 2885 English Emigrants to New England, 1620-1650*, pg. 2.

⁸ Pope, *Massachusetts Pioneers*, pg. 163.

⁹ Annett, *op. cit.*, pg. 289.

¹⁰ Chandler, *New Ipswich*, pg. 401.

¹¹ Holman, *op. cit.*, pg. 1.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Cutler, *op. cit.*, pg. 306.

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¹ Holman, *Felt and Allied Families*, Chicago, 1921, pg. 1.

² Rowe, *Ancient North Yarmouth and Yarmouth Maine 1636-1936*, pg. 12.

³ Rowe, *Ancient North Yarmouth and Yarmouth Maine 1636-1936*, pg. 12.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Annett, *History of Jaffrey New Hampshire*, Vol. 11, pg. 289.

⁶ Cutler, *Boston and Eastern Massachusetts Genealogies*, pg. 306.

⁷ Seward, *A History of the Town of Sullivan*, Vol. 11, pg. 967.

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R. Palgrave, Thomas Pierce; S.W., E. Sturges; N.E., Horne pond."¹⁴

His wife, Elizabeth Wilkinson (born about 1610) who died in 1694, she being a daughter of Widow Prudence Wilkinson who was an inhabitant of Charlestown in 1630 and who died in Malden in 1655, her will being proved July 26, 1655.¹⁵ Elizabeth joined the Charlestown church in 1639, 11th month, 19th day.¹⁶

George resided in Charlestown, Massachusetts with his wife and their children, George, Elizabeth, Mary, and Moses until 1640.¹⁷ George Felt removed about 1640 to Casco Bay Region¹⁸ where he became a landholder settling at Broad Cove (i.e. Wescustogo and Great Cove),¹⁹ District of Maine. He bought 300 acres of land at Broad Cove on Casco Bay,²⁰ from John Phillips, on the western side of the brook.²¹ His title to this he strengthened three years later by obtaining a deed from Gorges' (Sir Ferdinando Gorges) agent, Richard Vines. Corey, a historian, regards George Felt as an Indian trader rather than a settler during these first years.²²

(Of note is the apparent change of names in the Casco Bay area since the 1600's to the present. Now known as the Yarmouth and North Yarmouth area, these communities were known by the names of Broad Cove, Great Cove, North Yarmouth and Wescustogo.)

By 1643, George was considered the principal founder,²³ one of the pioneer settlers of this North Yarmouth,²⁴ District of Maine, and had large tracts of land.²⁵ "Although the arrival of George Felt at Broad Cove has been said to have marked the birthday of North Yarmouth and he was long regarded as our first permanent settler, facts that a more diligent search of the records have brought to light have deposed him from this high seat and given the honor to William Royall."²⁶

After a few years residence in North Yarmouth, he returned to Charlestown, settling²⁷ his family²⁸ in that part that was incorporated May 2, 1649 as Malden.²⁹ Felt's wife and young family remained at Malden³⁰ and he again became a resident at Casco Bay (i.e. Wescustogo).³¹ George Felt retained his home in Malden until some time after 1664, when he and the family seem to have taken up their residence at Casco Bay (i.e. Wescustogo).³² In 1664 he was again in Maine and in a deed made in that year describes himself as of "Casco in New England, Muson."³³ In 1670 he added to his possessions in Casco Bay by a further purchase from John Phillips of two thousand acres of land adjoining his first three hundred paying therefore sixty pounds. With the help of his sons he carried on his trading and farming enterprises until driven away by the Indian War.³⁴

After peace had come in 1678, the Pioneer George Felt is supposed to have returned to his possessions at Broad Cove but he was now an old man and remained but a short time. A portion of his land he sold in 1680 to Walter Gondall, the remainder, to which he had a good title under Gorges, he conveyed in 1684 to his son Moses and his grandson George.³⁵

14 Wyman, *Charlestown Massachusetts in the County of Middlesex, Genealogies and Estates 1629-1818*, Boston, 1879, David Chapp and Son Publishers, pg. 312.

15 Holman, *op. cit.*, pg. 2.

16 Record Book of the First Church in Charlestown, by Rev. Dr. Morse to Sept. 12, 1819 and Rev. Dr. Fay 1820 to 1839, pg. 19.

17 Rowe, *op. cit.*, pg. 12.

18 Pope, *Massachusetts Pioneers*, pg. 163.

19 Rowe, *op. cit.*, pg. 12.

20 Pope, *op. cit.*, pg. 163.

21 Holman, *op. cit.*, pg. 1.

22 Rowe, *op. cit.*, pg. 7. "The beauty of the region screened and protected from the sea by the thick, clustering islands of the bay, the practical advantages offered by its two rivers, and the bountiful supplies of lumber, pine, oak and walnut, within easy distance of the waterside, early attracted settlers to its shores. We may not fix with exactness the date when John Phillips, the young Welch Millwright, built his stone house on the shores of Broad Cove and laid claim to two thousand acres of the adjacent land. His rights, however, were those of a squatter only and his title worthless, it being given scant regard, later by Richard Vines when he was caring for the interests of Sir Ferdinando Gorges. Phillips, however, was not the loser, for in 1640 he had sold three hundred acres, including his home to George Felt of Charlestown and Malden."

23 Rowe, *Ibid.*, pg. 12.

24 Holman, *op. cit.*, pg. 1.

25 Cutler, *op. cit.*, pg. 306.

26 Rowe, *op. cit.*, pg. 12.

27 Holman, *op. cit.*, pg. 1.

28 Rowe, *op. cit.*, pg. 1.

29 Cutler, *op. cit.*, pg. 306.

30 Rowe, *op. cit.*, pg. 12.

31 Rowe, *op. cit.*, pg. 12.

32 Holman, *op. cit.*, pg. 1.

33 Cutler, *op. cit.*, pg. 306. "He appears to have acquired large tracts of land in Maine, and in 1670 increased his already considerable possessions by the purchase of two thousand acres more at Broad Cove, for which he paid only sixty pounds. Much of this land was afterward sold," although he retained enough to provide well for his sons.

34 Rowe, *op. cit.*, pg. 12.

35 Rowe, *Ibid.*, pg. 13.

In all, George Felt lived for forty years in and around the vicinity of North Yarmouth and Casco Bay Region, Maine.³⁷

Around 1680, George returned to his former home in that part of Charlestown, which became Malden.³⁸

But with all his vast areas of land, George Felt lost everything and died poor.³⁹ Records disclose that in May, 1681, on petition of James Nichols, Sr., Felt's son-in-law, the husband of his daughter Mary, the General Court ordered that "George Felt and his wife be accounted inhabitants of the town of Malden and accordingly the selectman of the town do take care of them." The aged couple thus became objects of charity,⁴⁰ charges on the town of Malden.⁴¹

The following petition under date of June 22, 1688⁴² was made to a Sir Edmund Andros, Governor, in vain for assistance⁴³ by George Felt.

"To His Excellency Sr Edmund Andros Knt, etc.

The Humble Petition of George Felt Senr. of Maulden. Sheweth; That it is my grief that I am compelled to trouble your Excellency at this time. But having about eighteen years since purchased of One John Phillips of Boston Gent late Decased a farm or Plaintation at a place called the Great Cove (in Caskoe Bay) containing about two thousand acres of upland and marsh as by a firm Deed under Sd Phillips hand and seale etc. for which I then paid him Sixty pounds money, and improved sd Farme or Plaintation severall year's before I bought it so that the whole time of my occupying of it was about one and twenty years. But some time after the late Indian warr it was withheld from me by some of the inhabitants of sd Town of Cascoe Bay and being by sd warr Much impoverished I could not recover it out of their hands. I also am now forced to suffer for want of convenient care taken of me in my present distresse being about eighty Seaven year's old and very crasy and weak.

Therefore your Petitiour recomendeth his case to your Excellencies prudent consideration humbly beceaching and earnestly begging that if it seem meet and convenient your Excellency would be pleased to favor your petitioner that he may have a confirmation of his sd land under much moderate quit rent etc. as well as an order to ye Townsmen of Maulden abovesd for something at present to releave your petitioner in this his estreem poverty etc. The which shall farther oblige your petitioner as in duty bound daily to pray for your Excellency etc."⁴⁴

George Felt and his wife remained in these poor circumstances until their deaths⁴⁵ — he in 1693, aged ninety-two years and his wife in 1694, "much advanced in years." They had six children, perhaps seven, there being a doubt whether one Peter was of their family. Those known to be their children were Elizabeth, Mary, George, Moses (died young), Aaron, and Moses.⁴⁶

1. Elizabeth, bap. January 26, 1639-40; mar. Sep. 1655 LARRABEE, William.

2. Mary, bap. January 26, 1639-40; mar. Feb. 1660

NICHOLS, James.

3. George, bap. January 26, 1639-40; mar. Nov. 25, 1662 ANDREWS, Philipa

4. Moses, bap. Dec. 20, 1641; probably died young.

5. Aaron, was living 1665.

6. Moses (Moyses) b. abt. 1651; mar. MAINE, Hannah.⁴⁷ He lived the region of North Yarmouth, Maine, for fifty years, but passed the later part of his life in "Rumney Marsh," which is now Chelsea, Massachusetts. (There is a question as to another wife by name of Lydia, surname unknown.)⁴⁸ Moses was born in Charlestown, Mass. and died later than 1734.⁴⁹

37 Chandler, *op. cit.*, pg. 404.

38 Annett, *op. cit.*, pg. 289.

39 Cutler, *op. cit.*, pg. 306.

40 Rowe, *op. cit.*, pg. 13.

41 Cutler, *op. cit.*, pg. 306.

42 Holman, *op. cit.*, pg. 1.

43 Pope, *op. cit.*, pg. 163.

44 Holman, *op. cit.*, pgs. 1 & 2.

45 Howe, *op. cit.*, pg. 13.

46 Cutler, *op. cit.*, pg. 306.

47 Holman, *op. cit.*, pg. 2.

48 Chandler, *op. cit.*, pg. 404.

49 Seward, *op. cit.*, pg. 967.

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