

THE GROW FAMILY

OF ANDOVER

NOTES ON PATERNITY OF
JOHN GROW AND MARY FARRINGTON

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The records of the North Parish Congregational Church, Andover, supply the following to the vital records of that town, viz., "John Grow, son of Elizabeth Nichols, servant to Nathaniel Frie, baptized 1728." (See p. 185, Vol. I, Vital Records Andover.) Also the following, "Mary, daughter of Rebecca Farnham, reputed dau. of Edward Farrington, born Jan. 31, 1723." (See p. 139, Vol. I, Vital Records Andover.)

On a slip of paper about 8 inches square, bound in to face p. 44 of the Tax Book of Andover by the selectmen, for years 1716-1767, may be found the following-- On back of the slip is, "An account of Elizabeth Nicols being Taken Care of by the Town." The paper is yellow with age, and the ink faded. On the face of this slip the following is written:

"Tacking Care and providing for Elizabeth Nicols and her child that began September the 15th day 1721, at charge of the Town."

"Then the sd Elizabeth Nicols was put to Nathaniel Abbots and remained ther 9 days and then put to Dr. Hows. Then the said Elizabeth Nicoles child was on the 15th of September 1721, put to Abraham Fosters care at the Towns charge and there stayed tel the 4th of October following that day 3 weeks wanting 2 days and then conveyed to Thomas Johnsons and was there tel the 29 of October 1721, and then put to Nathaniel Fries."

This also (see p. 101, Vol. for years 1718-1727, Court of General Sessions, Salem, Essex County, Mass.)--

"July 16, 1723, Rebecca Farnham of Andover appeared and confessed guilty of the crime of fornication and accused Edward Farrington, now or late of Andover, to be the father of her child.

x x x It is considered that she pay a fine of 50 sh. and costs, and stand committed till performed."

The record also shows that the fine of £2--10--00 was paid Aug. 2, 1723. (See p. 108, same court record.)

First, as to the identity of the John Grow and his mother Elizabeth Nichols --

If the baptism of John, the son of Elizabeth, occurred in infancy -- a ceremony required by the church rules in those days to be performed a few days after birth -- then this John Grow could not be the one who, supposedly b. in 1728, m. Mary Farrington in 1742, for he would then be but 14 years of age. This child of Elizabeth was bound out to Nathaniel Fries on or before 1728. At what age? The guardian, Frie, or Fry, is known to have been a strict church member. He in all probability brought about the baptism of the child he had taken, or then took, as a ward. If the parents of the infant were church members in good standing they would have seen to it that the baptism was duly performed at the proper time; but the child was, apparently, b. out of wedlock, and until they or its mother should purge herself or themselves by submitting to church discipline (after due confession) they or she could not offer the little one for baptism. The records contain no mention of any disciplinary action by the church, and it seems certain that there was no such action. Years passed, until the child presumably had reached the age of reason. What became of the mother we know not, but probably she died while in the care of Dr. Howes, a few days after her confinement, or she recovered and went away. The father was certainly a Grow, but he apparently did not assume responsibility for the child, and the identity of the father is unknown.

According to Congregational Church rules the grand-parents, if members in good standing, could offer a child of parents who had lapsed from church rules for baptism, but no such sponsors for little John Grow appeared. It seems to the compiler as well-nigh certain that the baptism was procured by the guardian; at the age of reason, the baptismal record

John and Nathaniel, nor to the years 1710 to 1733. There are traces of Grows with the last two names in Essex County during the latter years of the 18th century, perhaps sons of Samsel², or Samsel³, who were the descendants of John of Ipswich, but not of Thomas². That one of these was the father of Elizabeth Nichols' child seems to the compiler as probable, indeed almost certain.

The pastor of the church, Mr. Phillips, who made the record of the baptism of John Grow in 1726, and who witnessed the signing of the will of Nicholas Nichols in 1717, must have known the facts respecting the paternity of the child. The responsibility of Thomas Grow in this matter may be suggested, for he was then a resident, and eleven years before the baptism had witnessed the will of the father of Elizabeth Nichols, the supposed mother of a son who bore his own family name; but this presumption seems to be without justification.

During the twenty or more years residence of Thomas and Rebecca (Holt) Grow in Andover (1710 to 1730-1) they were members in good standing of this same Andover church. If Thomas was the reputed father of the child, the pastor of his church, certainly aware of the allegation, would have not been slow to enforce church discipline, of which the church records or the court records would contain some allusion; but nothing of such nature appears. Even the existing record of baptism contains no hint of any responsibility of Thomas in the matter. His act in witnessing the will of Nicholas Nichols occurred over four years before the date of birth of John Grow and eleven years before his baptism. Thomas Grow was b. in 1684, and Nicholas Nichols probably twenty or more years earlier, for the latter was a tax payer in Salem before Thomas was born. When the will was made Elizabeth was 23, and Thomas' nephew John³ was 20 at the date of the birth of John who m. Mary Farrington, i. e., in 1721, Elizabeth having at this time reached the age of 27. Thomas was then raising his own family, while John³ was not m. so far as is known. The presumption seems justified that Elizabeth Nichols, dau. of Nicholas Nichols, was the mother of John Grow, who m. Mary Farrington in 1742, and founded the Oxford line of Grows, and that

revealing his paternity. It seems probable that the guardian who learned from others who was the father gave the baptismal name John, which certainly was a family name of the Grows who at that time lived in the neighborhood.

The correct answer to the above interrogatory seems to be that the ward of Mr. Frie was in 1728 seven years of age. If this be so, then as respects name and age he meets the requirements of the John Grow who began to pay the poll-tax in Andover in 1741, who m. Mary Farrington in 1742, and who founded the Oxford line of Grows.

Elizabeth Nichols, the mother of John the ward of Nathaniel Frie, was, perhaps, a daughter of Nicholas and Elizabeth Nichols, from Salem, the former a tax payer there in 1679, removed to Andover and joined the church in 1714, made his will there May 28, 1717, and died Feb. 14, 1719 -- will probated 1720. The widow of this Nichols survived her husband, and she d. in 1748. She was named in the will. The children were -- i, Elizabeth, b. 1686, d. 1689; ii, Margaret, b. 1688, (named in will); iii, Francis, b. 1690, (not in will); iv, Elizabeth, b. 1694, (not in will); v, George, b., d. unms., 1706; vi, Hannah, b. 1697, (named in will); vii, Ruth, b., (named in will). The witnesses were -- Rev. Samuel Phillips (who baptized John Grow); Joseph Clark, and Thomas Grow. The last named, a son of John of Ipswich, had, in 1710, in Andover, m. Rebecca Holt, who bore him six children in Andover between 1712 and 1727.

Elizabeth, the fourth ch. of Nicholas and Elizabeth Nichols, was not named in the will. If she had m. and gone away, or if she were cut off by her father from sharing in the estate, she yet should have been referred to. There is no further record of this Elizabeth in Andover, unless the above cited record of 1728 refers to her.

It has been noted that in 1716 a John Grow was a contributor to a silver service fund for the Andover church, and that in 1732-1733 one Nathaniel Grow paid taxes in Andover. The presence of Grows in this town in the years stated was probably not confined or limited to Thomas,

John³ was the father of her child.

In Reading, adjoining Andover, lived at this period one Captain Thomas Nichols. He had several children b. in Reading, among them Elizabeth, in 1699, whose further history is unknown. In 1721 she was 22 and could have met the conditions of motherhood to John Grow b. in 1721 and baptized in 1728; but we have no evidence on which to base an assumption that she was concerned in the Andover record of 1721 and 1728. It is known that the home of Thomas Grow was very near the Andover-Reading line.

The determination of the identity and antecedents of Mary Farrington seems easier, for the above cited vital record in Andover, and the General Court Record for Essex County are pertinent. The Mary Farrington whose birth on Jan. 31, 1723, is recorded in Andover, was the dau. of Rebecca Farham, who alleged that the father of this child was Edward Farrington. This Mary, as respects name, age and birthplace, seems to fulfill the requirements of this case. She was in all probability the Mary who m. John Grow in 1742, "both of Andover." That a man b. out of wedlock and a woman in the same situation should become man and wife does not seem strange.

The record evidence in the case here discussed may be concisely stated thus --

1. John Grow and Mary Farrington, both of Andover, Mass., were m. Oct. 26, 1742, by Rev. John Barnard, pastor of the North Parish Congregational Church (Andover Vital Records).
2. John Grow, in 1744, brought to the Sutton, Mass., church, letter of dismission from the Andover church (Sutton Church Record).
3. John Grow, of Sutton and Oxford, and wife Mary Farrington, were b. respectively in 1720 and 1724. (Letter written in 1868 by Allen Kinne Grow, son of Kinne, grandson of Jacob, great-grandson of John of Oxford, who said the dates were obtained from the family Bible of Jacob Grow.)

4. John Grow commenced to pay poll-tax in Andover, Mass., in 1741, which indicates that he had then come of age. (Andover Tax Lists.)
5. One John Grow contributed 15 shillings towards the purchase of church silver service in Andover, year 1716. (Deering family mss. in Andover.)
6. Sept. 15, 1721, the care of Elizabeth Nichols and her child assumed at the charge of the town of Andover. The care of Elizabeth Nichols was entrusted to Nathaniel Abbott for 9 days and then to Dr. Hows for an unspecified period. No further mention of her. The care of her child on Sept. 15, 1721, was entrusted to Abraham Foster for 19 days, then to Thomas Johnson until the 27th of October, and then to Nathaniel Fries.
7. A John Grow, son of Elizabeth Nichols, bound out to Nathaniel Frie, was baptized at Andover by Rev. Samuel Phillips in the year 1728. (Andover Vital Records.)
8. Mary, dau. of Rebecca Farnham, and reputed dau. of Edward Farrington, b. in Andover, Jan. 31, 1723. (Andover Vital Records.)
9. Rebecca Farnham haled before the General Court of Essex County, Mass., July 16, 1723, confessed to the charge of having given birth to an illegitimate child, charged its paternity to Edward Farrington; was fined £2--10--00 by the court, and she paid the same Aug. 2, 1723. (Court of General Sessions, Salem, for years 1719-1727, pp. 101 and 109.)

It is recognized that this evidence does not prove beyond question that the John Grow who m. Mary Farrington in 1742 was the illegitimate offspring of Elizabeth Nichols, but the probabilities all point that way. John Grow's father was probably the son of Samuel² and grandson of John and Hannah (Lord) Grow, of Ipswich; but this cannot be proved as a fact. There is a weak point in this reasoning, however, for the John³, son of Samuel², was in 1721 but 20 years of age, while Elizabeth Nichols (dau. of Nicholas), the presumed mother of John Grow of Oxford was in 1721 27 years of age, a fully matured woman, and not likely to

be led astray, and quite unlikely to have for a lover one just out of his teens. Perhaps Elizabeth was of some other Nichols family that has not been identified?

It is well nigh certain that Mary Farrington, who became the wife of John Grow, was the issue of an irregular union of Edward Farrington and Rebecca Farnham of Andover.

Their parents were unconventional in their relations, but the founders of the Oxford Grow line strictly observed the law and convention. Their intention of marriage was duly published and they were m. in the church where the husband had been baptized. These two raised to maturity 16 children, and all married and raised families. Three sons -- all who were old enough -- fought for our independence in the revolutionary war. All their children were respected citizens, and so, too, are their legion of descendants.

Since it is impossible to definitely determine the paternity of John of Oxford, he is treated as the founder of a separate line, which assumes his b. about 1720 and his wife in 1725. If he was a grandson of John of Ipswich he would be John³. He is herein designated as John¹ of Oxford. It remains for the future investigator to prove the earlier chain of descent and to close the links.

Those who may be disposed to cast a stone at these two -- John and Mary -- should take into account the social state in those times and the severely rigorous puritan communities and churches as respects what Mr. Charles Francis Adams terms sexual morality. The censorious should read the early annals of those primitive congregations wherein were set down in plain words the offenses against virtue and convention by the members whose lapses are made the subject of church discipline -- resulting in admonition, suspension, and often in excommunication; and should see, on the pages yellow with age, line after line all blotted out and made illegible by later generations who thus endeavored to conceal or obliterate the evidence of their ancestors' turpitude. Fully one-half the cases of criminal prosecution by the General Court of the Peace at Salem recorded in one of the volumes of court records examined by the compiler, related to irregularities in the marriage

relation and offenses involving sexual immorality. It would seem that in those early days there was scarcely a family of high or low degree that did not supply cases exactly analagous to those that involved the Nichols, Farnhams, Farringtons and Grows of Andover. (See Sexual Morality of Early Puritan Churches, by Charles Francis Adams.)

ADDENDA

Miss Charlotte H. Abbott, a genealogist residing in Andover, Mass., in a letter to the compiler, dated July 7, 1914, states --

"I got lately from an old scrap of a note that I made some years back while searching the record of the Town Proceedings in the interest of Mr. Charles Barton for his ancestor, a trace of whom I found in a list of persons warned out of Andover, year 1720-1721; and of that date among the names of several 'warned out', the following -- 'Order given to Thomas Grow in 1720-1721;' and then, 'John Grow child of Elisabeth Nichols to be provided for.' I added a note at the time I took the record that Thomas Grow was already settled here."

This last refers to the Thomas Grow², maltster, son of John¹ of Ipswich, who m. in Andover, June 8, 1710, Rebecca Holt; who bought land in Andover in 1715, 1721 and 1722; raised there a family of 6 children, and in 1730 or 1731 removed to Pomfret, Conn., where he died Jan. 13, 1753. (See family 3, GrowGenealogy.)

Upon receipt of this letter the compiler wrote to Miss Abbott asking her to again consult this record of Town Proceedings, verify the entry, and state if the record relating to the order of banishment given to Thomas Grow, and the reference to a provision for the child of Elisabeth Nichols were of same or of diverse dates. In her reply dated Oct. 2, 1914, Miss Abbott said that after a diligent search she had failed to find a trace of the book, and also said that in the opinion of the custodian the book had been taken away by some unauthorized person and had never been returned.

In this same letter Miss Abbott supplied the substance of another record that she said she had not before noticed. It is on p. 44 of Town Proceedings of the Selectmen of

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Andover. I wrote asking for a literal copy of said record.
On Oct. 30, 1914, she supplied it as follows:

"Memoranda of the action of the Selectmen
"of Andover taking care and providing for
"Elesabeth Nicols and her child, that began
"September the 15th day 1721, at the charge
"of the Town."

"Then the sd Elesabeth Nicols was put to
"Nathaniel Abbots and remained ther 9 days
"and then put to Doctor hows."

"And the said Elesabeth Nicoles child was
"on the 15 of September 1721 put to Abraham
"Fosters care at the towns charge and there
"stayed tel the 4th of October following
"that day 3 weeks wanting 2 days and then
"convayed to Thomas Johnsons and was there
"tel the 27th of October 1721, and then put
"to Nathaniel Fries."

Indorsement on back -- "An account of Elesabeth Nicols
being Taken Care of by the town."

All of this was on a slip of paper about 8 inches square,
bound in to face p. 44 of the Tax Book of Andover for
years 1716 to 1767, in handwriting faded with age.

The above, considered in connection with the printed An-
dover record of baptism (1728) of John Grow, son of
Elizabeth Nichols, servant to Nathaniel Frie, would seem
to justify the following --

John Grow, son of Elizabeth Nichols, b. on or about
Sept. 15, 1721; mother and child supported at charge of
the town; mother cared for nine days by Nathaniel Abbot,
and after that for unspecified time cared for by Dr.
Hows. As she is not thereafter mentioned it is reason-
able to suppose that she died while in Dr. Hows' charge.

On Sept. 15th, presumed date of birth, the child was placed in care of Abraham Foster for 19 days, and then in the care of Thomas Johnson until the 27 Oct. 1721 (13 days). On this last date the child was bound out to Nathaniel Fries, and in 1728, age 7 years, baptized by name John Grow, a name that he had in all probability been known by since birth.

It will be remembered that Miss Abbott states she has a memo. made "some years back", when she was searching for Barton records, that made mention in 1720-1721 of a town provision for John Grow son of Elizabeth Nichols, and also of a mention that one Thomas Grow was warned out of town; the natural inference being that Thomas Grow was the father of John, son of Elizabeth Nichols; that he was without property and unable to support his bastard child; hence the town had to provide for him.

There was a Thomas Grow lived in Andover from 1710 or 1712 to 1730 or 1731. He was a son of John¹ of Ipswich. He is known to have had landed property when he went to Andover from Lynn or Ipswich, married there in 1710, and acquired other land there in later years; in fact, was a considerable land owner -- a maltster by trade. He had six children born in Andover. His wife was Rebecca Holt. The dates of birth of all these children and the names of five are supplied by the Andover town records; but the name of the first, b. in 1712, has been effaced by handling and age so it cannot be read, but we do read clearly the date.

The records of the town of Pomfret, Conn., whither Thomas and family removed in 1730 or 1731, account for all of the five named children of Thomas and Rebecca (Holt) Grow, the same names as in the Andover records; but their family embraced another whose name was Rebecca -- the same as that of Thomas' wife. It is a reasonable presumption that the child of Thomas and Rebecca born as recorded in 1712 (their first child) was this same Rebecca (Grow) Ingalls, of Pomfret.

Thomas Grow died intestate in Pomfret in 1753, but the records give an account of the distribution of some of his property. In this apportionment all their six children

participated, including Rebecca. There is no mention of any other heir, no reference to a son John. It seems certain to this compiler that any presumption or suggestion that Thomas Grow² who lived in Andover from 1715 to 1730, and had a considerable estate, was the father of John Grow the child of Elizabeth Nichols, is unjustified. Who, then, was this Thomas Grow who according to the unverifiable record of Miss Abbott was "warned out" in 1720 or 1721? And who was the father of John Grow?

I very much doubt if there was more than one Thomas Grow in Andover at that time, and also believe that in some way Miss Abbott, not interested in the Grows when she made her memorandum, but in the Bartons, miswrote in her memorandum the name Thomas for John or Nathaniel, who were nephews of Thomas and sons of Samuel² (John¹) of Ipswich, for they were in Andover about this time as has been shown.

If the name of the child b. in 1712 in Andover was John, then he was of legitimate issue; but he does not appear in the Pomfret records. In that case Rebecca's birth was not recorded.

But Elizabeth Nichols certainly had a son born in 1721 who in 1728 was baptized as John Grow, by the same parson who baptized all the other children of Thomas and Rebecca Grow. If their first child, b. in 1712, was the John Grow who in 1742 m. Mary Farrington, (who certainly was b. out of wedlock), what became of John Grow the son of Elizabeth Nichols? It seems well-nigh certain that he was the son of Elizabeth Nichols, bound out to Nathaniel Fries, who had him baptized in 1728, and with whom he lived till of age, in 1742, and then paid his poll-tax.

If Miss Abbott should be able to verify her memorandum made "some years ago", and prove that there was a Thomas Grow "warned out" of town in 1720-1721, such verification would not change my conclusion respecting the non-responsibility of Thomas Grow, the settled resident and property owner, of Andover, years 1710-1730; but such verification would prove that there was another Thomas Grow, probably an unrecorded son of Samuel², who was a brother of Thomas², the only two children of John¹ who had issue of record.

I think that the father of John Grow, son of Elizabeth
Nichols, was John³ son of Samuel², and that he was the one
who was "warned out"; that he went to New Hampshire and
there raised a family, as is suggested in my genealogy
of the Grows of Ipswich and Oxford.

Rowland

Wilmington D.C.
Apr 29. 1915

GENERAL GEO. W. DAVIS, U. S. A., RET.
1150 CONNECTICUT AVENUE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

February 19, 1912.

Find

Town Clerk,
Andover, Massachusetts.

Dear Sir:

Some two years ago you were so kind as to furnish me with useful data respecting births as appearing on your records of the family of Thomas and Rebecca Holt Grow, the children, six in number, having been born between the year 1712 and 1727, but in the vital statistics of Andover, Volume I, containing only Andover births, I find an additional birth not mentioned in your letters to me. The entry reads as follows: 'John, s. Eliz. Nicholls, "servant to Nathl Frie," bp. there 1728, C.R. 1.' The volume of marriages and deaths of Andover, which will be volume two of the publication above referred to, has not yet been received in the Library of Congress, although Volume I has just come to hand. Hence it is that I cannot consult the printed statistics of the vital records of Andover for marriages and deaths.

The father of this John ^{the} son of Elizabeth Nicholls, must of course have been a Grow, but the record is singularly defective in that the Christian name of the father is not given, while the mother is said to have been the servant of Nathaniel Frie. *not so - Other account* The record standing as it does would suggest the possibility that this John Grow, baptised 1728, was born out of wed-

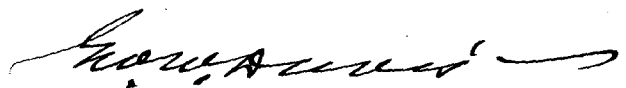
lock. It has occurred to me that the marriage records, which are not accessible to me, might throw some light upon this. However, I note among the births in the Nicholls family "Elizabeth, daughter to Nicholas and Elizabeth Nicholls, born March 27, 1694." She would be of an age suitable for a child ~~might be~~ baptised in 1728.

According to the family bible of a descendant of John Grow of Sutton and Oxford it is said that the ancestor was John Grow, who in 1742 married in Andover Mary Farrington, and that he was born in 1720. I have failed entirely to identify this John of Andover who married Mary Farrington and to ascertain who were his parents. It seems to me certain that he is not a son of Thomas and Rebecca Holt Grow. If this date 1728 is a misprint or a mistake by a copyist for the year 1720, then I would properly infer that this John, son of Elizabeth Nicholls, was the John who married Mary Farrington in 1742 and settled in Sutton and Oxford, but if the John, son of Elizabeth Nicholls, was born in 1728 he would have been but 14 years of age at the date of the marriage of Mary Farrington.

I have written somewhat in the same line as the above to the Clerk of the Congregational Church in the North Parish of Andover to see if the church records might throw some light upon it.

If you should be able to ascertain anything that will solve my trouble I shall be under very many obligations, and of course shall be glad to compensate you for the time and trouble spent in the search.

Yours very sincerely,



GENERAL GEO. W. DAVIS, U. S. A., RET.
1150 CONNECTICUT AVENUE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 22, 1912.

Miss Charlotte H. Abbot,
Genealogist, Andover, Mass.

Dear Miss Abbott:

Your second letter and card have come to hand. I hope soon to hear from you respecting the results of your visit to Salem for search of the court records. I infer from what you say on the card that you may perhaps be able through a notice in the Boston Evening Transcript to secure a reference to the contributions made some years since to that paper wherein reference was made to the emmigration of the Grows of Oxford to Tunbridge, Vermont. I have the Tunbridge town records, and I think have identified all of the Oxford Grows who went there, yet I would be glad to see what it was those contributors stated whose initials you gave in your first letter.

I am a subscriber to the Boston Transcript, so whatever may re-appear there I would take note of.

I have consulted all the vital records that have been published of all the towns in Essex County, Mass., and all of the land and probate records that have been printed, looking, of course, for the name Grow or its variants, Grove and Groo. *etc.* It occurs to me that the tax lists of those towns, which I have not seen, might show the presence in some of them adjacent to Ipswich of John² and Nathaniel², who, you will remember I stated

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in my belief, emigrated to New Hampshire. Thomas², son of John¹, lived for a time in Lynn, then in Andover, and later in Pomfret, Conn. William², John¹, married Johanna¹, and after the birth of one child, removed to York, Maine. Joseph², John¹, lived for a time in Ipswich; probably never married. But John² and Nathaniel² have not been located. It was probably the son of one of these who you find was a tax payer in Andover in 1732-33, and as you say, perhaps this Nathaniel was the father of John, baptised in Andover 1728.

Yours sincerely,

Edward Davis