

Research on Possible English Origin

In presenting here what our genealogical and historical inquiry has revealed concerning our immigrant ancestor we shall refer to him mainly by his given name which, as above stated, was Philip. And though his wife, Martha, is named with him in a number of the several and various records concerning him, we shall in quoting from these not always note this, and shall later present whatever light the records reveal concerning her.

In turning to the Beverly¹⁰ records of the time indicated by the Chapman findings¹¹ as that during which our immigrant ancestor was a resident of Beverly, we anticipated that whatever might be found there concerning him would be under the surname Cody, and perhaps also Code as suggested by the Chapman theory¹² concerning the nationality of this ancestor's ancestry; and since much genealogical and historical inquiry has been made for Essex County, (of which was Beverly), by the Essex Institute¹³, we turned first to the index of this Society's publications to see if the surname Cody or Code might be there. While neither of these surnames was there, the closely resembling one, Codie was, and since the given name for this was Philip, we turned to the pages¹⁴ indicated. There, in an article¹⁵ concerning Beverly around 1700, we came upon a statement that one of the homes (of those there designated) was that of "Philip Moody," who, as was claimed, purchased it in 1698 and lived in it for many years, when in 1723 he sold it with his name written in the deed for this as Philip Gody; furthermore it was stated here that in other Essex County records this Philip's surname was recorded as Legody, Codie and Lecodie. In spite of the variety of the surnames given here for this Philip we were encouraged to follow their lead, not only because of the resembling one Codie, but because Gody suggested the chance that a pronunciation of "c" had been understood as "g"; moreover we were encouraged to follow this lead by the fact that the period here named as that of this Philip's ownership of this Beverly home¹⁶ was practically that indicated by the Chapman findings as the period during which our ancestor Philip resided at Beverly. Accordingly it was our interest first to read the deed for this Philip's purchase of the Beverly home in 1698. Turning for this to the Essex County registry of deeds¹⁷ we failed to find the name "Philip

Moody" in its index, and by this we knew there had been some misunderstanding concerning the grantee's name as recorded in this deed. With the guidance of the grantor's name we readily came to the required deed and found the grantee's name variously spelled as M Cody, Mocody and Micody, and so written that a casual reader of this deed might assume any one of these spellings, especially "M Cody" to be the surname "Moody."

Having thus disposed of the claim that this Philip's surname had been recorded as "Moody," there was then to be considered the claim¹⁸ that in the deed for the sale of this home his surname was recorded as Gody, a name seeming scarcely to resemble the variously spelled three-syllable one of the purchase deed. In the registry index we found the name Philip Gody referring to two deeds to both of which he was party as grantor, one of date 1723 and the other a couple of years later. On reading the 1723 deed we found that the property there described was that purchased in 1698 by the Philip of the variously spelled surnames.¹⁹ Accordingly was verified the above quoted claim that the Philip who purchased this property in 1698, sold it many years later (1723) with his surname recorded as Gody.

But upon what basis in fact could it be claimed that this Philip of the Beverly home (1698-1723) was our ancestor Philip? If this Philip was our ancestor, why was his name recorded in the 1698 deed²⁰ as a three-syllable name? And why, instead of "c" was it initialed "g" in the deed (1723) which notes the sale of this property? And what of the claim in the above quoted article that the surname of the Philip of this Beverly home (1698-1723) was sometimes recorded as Codie, Lecodie and Lagody?

Finding no other Philip in the Beverly records of that time whose surname at all resembled our family name, and in the light of the Chapman claim that our ancestor Philip lived in Beverly during a period which was practically covered by the dates 1698-1723,²¹ we sought answers to the above questions by a further reading of Beverly records of that time. For this we turned first to the index of the Essex County registry of deeds to see whether any deeds recorded the surnames Codie, LeCodie or Lagody, by which, as the above quoted²² antiquarian stated, the Philip of the Beverly home (1698-1723) was variously known. Only one of these was in this index and that with a slightly different spelling, having "e" instead of "a" in the first syllable, making it Legody instead of Lagody. And since the given name here was Philip we turned to the deeds which this name indicated. There were three of these, of dates respectively 1708, 1710 and 1720. The first two recorded a purchase of land by this Philip Legody, while for the third, he was grantor. Upon reading these deeds we learned that the grantor²³ deed did not dispose of the property bought by Philip Legody, as described in the deeds of 1708 and 1710. We surmised therefore (in the light of the above quoted article) that he may²⁴ have sold these lands with his name recorded otherwise than Legody. Accordingly we turned to the second of the Gody deeds of the date 1725 (the first, of date 1723, being, as above stated, that for the sale of the Beverly home purchased by him in 1698) and upon reading the description of the lands conveyed by this deed, we found it practically to accord with that of the lands bought by Philip Legody as recorded in the deeds of 1708 and 1710. Thus we came upon specific evidence that the Philip who purchased a home in Beverly, in 1698, which he sold in 1723, with his surname recorded as Gody was for a period of years, while a resident of Beverly, recorded by the surname Legody.

Of the two other surnames, Codie and LeCodie, given in the above quoted article as those found in some of the records concerning this Philip of the Beverly home 1698-1723, neither was found in the registry of deeds index. But in the meantime we had come upon these surnames in the Beverly church records²⁵ of the period of our interest, to which we had turned to verify the Chapman statement that there existed at Beverly the baptism-records of the six children of our ancestor Philip and his wife Martha. In these church records we looked not only for the surnames quoted as those found in various records for the Philip of the Beverly home 1698-1723, but we naturally looked also, and at first, for our family name Cody. We found this but once in these Beverly church records and that with John and not Philip as the given name, as was the case also in the one record where the surname was Lecodie. But though we found in these church records neither of the above surnames with Philip as the given name we came upon the surnames Lecody and Codie and with these, mainly baptism records, the given names of the parents were Philip and Martha. That the Philip of these church records was our ancestor Philip was evidenced by the fact, which our reading of these records soon discovered, that the names of the children of these baptism records were those of the children of our ancestor Philip, as these were found in various Hopkinton records²⁷, and as given in Philip's will, (probated at Hopkinton, 1743).²⁸ As added evidence that this Philip of the Beverly church records was our Philip of Hopkinton, 1720-1743, was the fact that the last of these church records, of date 1724, recorded that a letter of dismissal from the Beverly church to the church at Hopkinton had been given to "Martha, wife of Philip Codie."

Having by these evidences identified this Philip of the church records with the Philip of Hopkinton, 1720-1743, who by genealogical evidence²⁹ we know was our ancestor, we turned to ask whether with a like assurance we could claim he was the Philip of the above designated Beverly home purchased in 1698 and sold in 1723. That the antiquarian author of the above quoted article had, to his satisfaction, proved this identification, was evidenced by the fact above noted that he there claimed³⁰ that in certain records concerning the Philip of the Beverly home, 1698-1723, the surname was written as Codie, which as above noted we had found to be the case in certain of the Beverly church records concerning the Philip of those records. That this identification was entirely justified was evidenced by certain facts which our reflective consideration of the Beverly records disclosed. There was, in the first place, the fact that the spelling Codie of the surname was not the rule throughout the church records, and that in certain of these the spelling of it was Lecody which in pronunciation, as is evident, resembles the Legody of the majority of the Essex County deed records to which the Philip of the Beverly home, 1698-1723, was party while a resident of Beverly. But in addition to the closely resembling sound in the pronunciation of these two names there was the fact that where the wife's name was given in the deed records it was Martha, as it was throughout the church records. And there was the very telling evidence that the Philip of the Beverly home, 1698-1723, was the Philip of the church records, by the fact that the date of the last of these church records was practically that at which the Beverly home was sold (21). And as final evidence we may add the fact that only once after the sale of this home was Philip party to an Essex County deed, and it was by this deed of date 1725, that he disposed of all property owned by him after the sale of his home.³¹ Nor was there found in any Essex County record thereafter a

Philip with surname Legody, Gody, Lecody or Codie. Nor for that matter were any of these surnames with given name Philip found in any other records of that time. Thus without doubt the Philip of the Beverly home, 1698-1723, and of the Beverly church and town records, was the Philip of Hopkinton who by genealogical evidence we know was our ancestor, and whose surname was always there recorded as Cody, though sometimes with an inserted "a" making it Coady.³²

Though thus led to accept this identification without reservation we still were interested to inquire from the records why our Philip's surname should have been recorded as Codie, in the first two church records concerning him, while it was not so recorded in any other of the numerous and various records making mention of him, except in a couple of places where the surname seems but a copy of this Codie spelling.³³ In seeking an answer we first asked concerning the conditions under which these first two church records were made. By the fact that the first of these records was that of the admission of Philip and Martha to this church as communicants,³⁴ it would seem that only then were they coming to be known in the Beverly community and that accordingly their name was scarcely a familiar one there. Also as the church records show, the minister of the church at that time was the recorder³⁵ of its events and by the authority of his position as minister he may easily have decided to write this unfamiliar name according to his own idea of how it should be recorded. That he actually did use his own idea about this is plainly indicated by the fact that though Philip, by the evidence of all other of the several and various records concerning him while he was a resident of Beverly, pronounced his name as of three syllables with "le" as the initial one, here with the "le" omitted the name is of two syllables only. Also here, the final syllable "le" is found in no other records (excepting the two copies from these as above noted); in all other records the final syllable is recorded as "y". And with this evidence that this minister-recorder took these two liberties in the spelling of Philip's name, it seems a reasonable assumption that it was also at his arbitrary decision that the "c" spelling of Philip's name was thus introduced into the church records of it. Perhaps upon ignoring the "le" he thought God-ie³⁶ scarcely suitable and accordingly wrote it Cod-ie. But not only by the above named indications may it thus be claimed that the "c" spelling of Philip's name in these records was at the arbitrary decision of this minister-recorder, but this is plainly evidenced by the fact that in the third church record concerning our Philip where, as above noted, his name was recorded as of three syllables with "le" as the initial one, the "c" was enclosed in brackets as was the "e" of the "le", making it L(ec)ody.³⁷ Plainly by this use of brackets the recorder of three years later sought to show that he was making a compromise spelling of this surname, in an attempt to reconcile the earlier records of it with the sound of it as pronounced by Philip. Thus while using "c" this recorder enclosed it in brackets to show that it was a compromise. By these evidences concerning the Codie spelling of our Philip's name in the first two church records concerning him it seems an entirely reasonable conclusion that had the minister-recorder of these records, of dates respectively 1704-5 and 1706-7, shown the same consideration for Philip's pronunciation of his name as did the various writers of the deeds of dates respectively 1708, 1710, 1720, his name in the church records would have been written Legody as it was in those deeds. And doubtless as Legody would it have been written in the first Essex County deed to which Philip was party had the writer of that deed understood Philip's pronunciation; for though the first syllable of the three-syllable

name recorded in that deed was not written as "le", the fact that it was variously written, as above stated, plainly serves as evidence that the writer of it was not sure of Philip's pronunciation and took a chance at the spelling of it, and so missed getting the initial sound correctly recorded.³⁸

Accepting the above explanation for the spelling for our Philip's name in our first record concerning him (deed of 1698), and acknowledging as it seems reasonable to do that the Codie spelling of it was not at his dictation, we must logically conclude by the evidence of the numerous other records where his surname appears while he was a resident of Beverly, that our immigrant ancestor upon his arrival at Beverly and during the probably more than twenty-five³⁹ years of his residence there was known by a three-syllable name having "le" as its initial one. Moreover by the dependable evidence of the deed records he doubtless during the Beverly years spelled the second syllable with "g" and not "c" making his pronunciation of his name Legody. And by this evidence we may logically conclude that Legody was the pronunciation of the surname which he had inherited.