

## The Beverly Beginnings

Since, as above abundantly evidenced, our Philip at the time of our earliest record concerning him, and for many years thereafter, pronounced his name with "le" as its initial sound<sup>40</sup> it must reasonably be concluded that "le" was the initial sound of his inherited pronunciation of his surname. But though he inherited the use of "le" with his surname and long continued this usage he, by the evidence of the several Hopkinton records concerning him, discarded this usage when he left Beverly to establish<sup>41</sup> himself at Hopkinton. But, as is well known by students of surnames, where the initial syllable of a surname is "le" and can thus be discarded without detriment to the essential character of the name, it plainly is a word in its own right, qualifying the distinctive part of the name. And, as is commonly known by those at all conversant in French, where "le" is thus used as a word in its own right qualifying another word, it is the French definitive which our English "the" translates. Accordingly where "le" is thus used in a surname as a qualifying word it plainly indicates that the bearer of it is of French descent. By the fact then that our Philip came eventually to discard the initial "le" of the inherited pronunciation of his surname, we know that he recognized it as the French definitive which by its omission could not detract from the distinctive part of his name, which by the evidence of the Essex County deed records, he pronounced gody. And by our Philip's having inherited a surname with its distinctive part qualified by this French definitive "le" we have specific and definite evidence that he was of French ancestry.

And not only was this ancestor, Philip, of French ancestry, but by certain indications from the records it may be judged that he was born and brought up in a French-speaking community, quite likely in France itself. That Philip was scarcely English-speaking at the time he purchased a home in Beverly—our earliest record of him—seems reasonably evidenced by the peculiar spelling of his name in this deed.<sup>42</sup> For here, as above noted, not only does the spelling of his name differ noticeably from the Legody spelling of it in all later deeds while he was a resident of Beverly, but there are variations in the spelling which plainly suggest that the writer of the deed was puzzled to know how this name

should be written in order to express Philip's pronunciation of it. For this peculiar recording of Philip's name there seems only the explanation that Philip's pronunciation was so far foreign-sounding to the English writer of this deed that he could but guess how it should be spelled.

As further evidence that Philip was scarcely English-speaking upon his arrival at Beverly is the fact that only after six (4) years of residence there did he and Martha become communicants of its church, as we know by a church record of date 1704-5<sup>43</sup>. For, since they were admitted to this church membership as "communicants" and not as converts, scarcely would they have waited so long for this except that they needed time to acquire the language of the entirely English-speaking community of Beverly. And by various other indications from the records (5), later to be considered, it must be concluded that Philip and Martha were born in a French-speaking land, probably in France itself, and that there the years of their youth had been spent.