

CONCERNING THE FIRST AMERICAN  
ANCESTOR  
OF  
THIS CODY GENEALOGICAL FAMILY

By the research work of those above named, it was early learned from various fifth generation traditions, that the first American ancestor of this family lived for a time in Middlesex County, Massachusetts, in the town of Hopkinton and by inquiry there, it was learned that he previously lived in the adjoining county of Essex in the town of Beverly.

Accordingly, for possible light concerning the life of this ancestor, they turned to these towns for a reading of whatever extant records there, seemed to promise help toward this.

Below is a brief account of this research work and its resulting light concerning this ancestor.

Early in this research undertaking, there was found in a publication of the Essex Institute (an antiquarian research society) a paper concerning residents of Beverly of the date indicated by Hopkinton records as that at which the first American ancestor of this family had lived there, and here was found mentioned a *Philip Gody* of whom it was said that he purchased a home in Beverly in 1698, in which he with his family lived until 1723, at which time it was sold by him. Since by family tradition and also by Hopkinton records the given name of this ancestor was known to be *Philip*, and since the date of sale of this Beverly home was about the date this ancestor became a resident of Hopkinton, it was readily surmised that the name written as *Gody* was a mis-print for *Cody*. But upon turning to the registry of deeds for Essex County, the name of the grantor of this deed was found written plainly as *Gody*, and acknowledged by a carefully pencilled "mark" more elaborate in form than that commonly used for this purpose; and there, also was found another deed of a little later date for which the grantor's name was so written. And through the index to this registry of deeds, it was learned that this *Philip Gody* had earlier purchased property in Beverly, in the deeds for which his surname was recorded as *Legody*. Since by the evidence of this registry of deeds this *Philip Gody's* surname had been recorded as *Legody* and since, as is commonly known, a name so prefaced by this syllable which later is discarded, marks the bearer thereof as

being of French ancestry, it seemed plainly evidenced that *Philip Gody* (*LeGody*) was of French birth or at least of French ancestry. Moreover by various Beverly records it was plainly evidenced that upon coming to the New World he was not English speaking. Of these records was that of a deed for his purchase of a home in Beverly, for there the recording of his name was such that the antiquarian writer, above quoted, guessed it was meant for "Moody."

Since this so widely differed from the name as written in various other Beverly deeds (where as above noted it was written as *Legody* in the first of these and then as *Gody*) it seemed plainly evidenced that at the time he bought his Beverly home he was so far from being English speaking that he failed to make clear to this English speaking recorder how his name should be written.

That this *Philip Legody*, (*Gody*) of the Beverly deeds who sold his Beverly home there in 1723, was the Philip who at about that date became a resident of Hopkinton, was evidenced by various Beverly and Hopkinton records. Among these were those showing the given names of the family of Philip of Beverly were those of the Philip of Hopkinton; and their letter of admission to the church at Hopkinton was by letter of dismissal from the church at Beverly.

For Philip's name being recorded at Hopkinton as *Cody* and not as *Gody* as in the deeds for the sale of his Beverly holdings, explanation seems reasonably to be found in the early Beverly church records of it, that of the admission of Philip and his wife to this church in 1705 and that, at a little later date, of the baptism of their then four children. In these records, the earliest mention of them after they became residents of Beverly, their name is written as *Codie*. Since the *Codie* spelling of this Philip's surname was found in no other record of it, its being so spelled in these two records of it seemed plainly due to a desire on the part of the then minister of this church to have the name recorded as seemed fitting and proper for them as members of the English membership of this church. For this he would naturally think to discard the French prefacing "Le" and seeing that by this omission the spelling *Gody* would have for English ears a sound of irreverence he thought to use *C* instead of *G* for its initial letter. That this minister took liberties with this name seems further evidenced by his using "ie" for the final syllable instead of the "y," found in all other records of it. That Philip was not influenced by this minister's recording of his named was evidenced by the fact above noted, that during the

years of his life at Beverly he used the spelling of his name as he had inherited it. But, as history shows, so closely related were church and school in those days, that as their name was written in the record of their baptism so they would be taught to write it. But though by this church record of their name, they were led to use the C initialling of it they, as evidenced by all Beverly records for and by them, early turned (doubtless under advice from their father) to his use of y as its final syllable and to the French prefacing of it used by him until leaving Beverly to reside at Hopkinton.

That Philip and his sons, upon leaving Beverly agreed that thereafter they would discard the French prefacing of their name was evidenced by the fact that in no Hopkinton record of their name was this found. And, by the evidence of all Hopkinton records of his name, it had then seemed to Philip to be the part of wisdom for him to turn to the C initialling of his name which from their early childhood was that used by his sons. Thus by this decision, the surname of the first American ancestor of the genealogical family of this book became *Cody* instead of the *LeGody* of his inheritance.

That Philip and his wife were of a like following with the Beverly church membership was evidenced by the record of their admission to this church, which simply reads "received to communion with us, Philip *Codie* and his wife." And since, as history shows, this Beverly church membership was of that English Protestant following then referred to as Non-Conformist, it was evidenced that Philip and his wife were of the Protestant following in France, commonly referred to as Huguenot, the members of which as history shows, were being in those times denied the freedom they had come to desire in matters of religion and education. And by this it became known that the first American ancestor of this *Cody* family and his wife were of those many who came to the New World to find the freedom denied to them in the land of their birth.

That the Beverly home of Philip and his family was a pleasant one may well be judged by the deed for its purchase which says that there were six acres of land with "fruit trees" and "timber trees," "a dwelling house, out housing and fencing." That the home at Hopkinton was likewise pleasant may well be judged by various Hopkinton records. That the first American ancestor of this *Cody* genealogical family was a man of diligence and intelligent resourcefulness may well be judged by his not only being able to thus provide well for his growing family, but also, to accumulate a considerable property as is indicated by his will.

That this ancestor for some years was seafaring and later turned to the craft of weaving was learned by a reading of the Beverly deeds in which his occupation was named. And that upon coming to reside at Hopkinton he turned to "husbandry" became known by various Hopkinton records.

In an old and partly destroyed Hopkinton town book were found various recordings concerning him by which it was learned that during his twenty years as a resident of Hopkinton he frequently rendered valuable service to church and community.

Concerning Philip's wife, it was early learned that her given name was Martha but no record of the surname of her birth was found. By this and by the fact that the eldest child of Philip and Martha was some three years of age at the time their Beverly home was purchased it seemed clearly indicated that their marriage had taken place before their coming to the New World. By Philip's various references to her in his will it may well be judged she was to him a helpful and devoted companion throughout their long life together. That Martha, after Philip's death, signed papers in her own handwriting though during his lifetime she signed as did he, seemed not only to indicate her regard for him but also that she was a person of more education than was common for women of those early pioneer days.

**LYDIA S. CODY**

Chairman of Historical Board  
of  
Cody Family Association

(For more detailed account of this research work with carefully annotated references to the records which proved helpful see a paper by Lydia S. Cody published in the Cody Family Directory 1941.)