

17th and 18th Century Daggett Ancestors

For the descendants of Dorothy Ann "Billie" Daggett Wild
(1900-1964)

By Janice Mattson Gallant, her granddaughter



The story begins with John Doggett, born in England about 1602. He was a very early Massachusetts settler, arriving with Governor Winthrop in 1630. He lived in Watertown for some years and moved to Martha's Vineyard (shown in red in this map of Massachusetts) about 1648.

Doggett and his wife had 3 sons (John, Thomas and Joseph) and 2 daughters (Elizabeth and Hepzibah). In 1642, Governor Thomas Mayhew granted Doggett over 500 acres on Martha's Vineyard, provided "he not take up his farm

within three miles of the spring that is by the harbor in my lot..." But the relationship had soured by 1660 when Mayhew fined Doggett "ye sum of five thousand, upon ye breach of order in purchasing lands." A couple of years later, there was more unpleasantness when Doggett filed a formal complaint regarding "the title of a certain pcell of land granted unto the said John Dogged by Mr. Thomas Mayhew". The court decided in favor of Doggett: "The Jury find for the plaintiff the full title granted him by Mr. Thomas Mayhew, Senr." From "The History of Martha's Vineyard" by Charles Edward Banks (1911):

This probably arose...from (Doggett's) purchase of the Indians at Ogkeshkuppe of a farm of five hundred acres without Mayhew's consent, though Doggett had been granted the choice of a farm of that size by Mayhew in 1642..."(Doggett's) success in retaining the "farm" was one of great humiliation to Mayhew, though the latter was clearly in the wrong.

John Doggett died in 1673 at the age of 71. His will provided various bequests for his wife and children, including cattle, horses, oxen and, of course, land.

John Doggett's son Thomas (our ancestor) married Mayhew's favorite daughter Hannah in 1657. In a letter to Governor Winthrop, Governor Mayhew praised Thomas as "my son Doggett, that hath more language than any other Englishman upon the Island, and is a considerable young man" . Thomas's position was assured and throughout his life he was an official of one sort or another in the Mayhew government. He and Hannah had 4 sons (Thomas, Samuel, John and Joshua) and 5 daughters (Jemima, Mary, Patience, Ruth, and Martha). Thomas died in 1691 at the age of 61. It is Thomas who started using the name Daggett instead of Doggett.

Although not in our direct lineage, Thomas's brother Joseph is worth a brief mention. His marriage to an "Indian princess" created quite a stir. The name of the Indian woman has been lost, but that branch of the Daggett family has been referred to as "The Bow and Arrow Daggetts".

Of Thomas and Hannah's children, the one in our direct lineage was their eldest child Thomas. He was active in the town militia and was often referred to as Captain Daggett. He is said to have been a carpenter, and was described by one of his contemporaries as "a peaceable man and well inclined and of good understanding". It is thanks to Thomas that we have the Mayflower connection -- his wife Elizabeth Hawes was the great granddaughter of John Howland of the Mayflower. Thomas and Elizabeth had 4 sons (Samuel, Timothy, Thomas and Benjamin) and 5 daughters (Elizabeth, Jemima, Thankful, Mary, and Desire). Thomas died in 1726 at the age of 68, leaving an estate valued at 1393 pounds, a handsome property for those times.

Thomas's son Benjamin held the office of deacon in the church for 40 years. He married Margery Homes, and they had 8 children: 4 sons (William, Timothy, Benjamin, and John) and 4 daughters (Elizabeth, Catherine, Hannah, and Mary). Benjamin Daggett died in 1783 at the age of 82, described as "a man of eminent piety and virtue".

Deacon Benjamin Daggett's wife Margery Homes had her own noteworthy pedigree and colonial connections. Her older brother, Robert Homes, married Mary Franklin, sister of Benjamin Franklin. Her father William Homes was a clergyman, as were her grandfather Robert Craighead, and uncle, Thomas Craighead.

Cotton Mather described Thomas Craighead as "a man of singular piety and humility and meekness and patience and self denial and industry in the work of God". According to James Geddes Craighead in "The Craighead Family: A Genealogical Memoir of the Descendants of Rev. Thomas and Margaret Craighead, 1658-1878": "Under his impassioned sermons not infrequently his audience would be melted to tears, and the emotions of his hearers became so intense that they were unwilling to disperse at the proper time. On one of these occasions, near the close of April, 1739, he became exhausted, and hastened to pronounce the benediction; and waving his hand he exclaimed, 'Farewell! farewell!' and sank down and expired in the pulpit."

Deacon Benjamin Daggett's youngest son John Daggett was a "sea captain" in his early life. He married Susanna Stewart in 1784, the year after his father died. John was 40 years old; Susanna was 22. They had 3 sons (Elijah, Holmes Stewart and Thomas) and two daughters (Susanna and Sarah). In 1800 John's wife Susanna died of "pulmonary consumption" at the age of 38. The 5 children ranged in age from about 5 to 15; John was 56.



Three years after Susanna's untimely death, widower John Daggett married 48 year old Betty Crowell. The family remained on Martha's Vineyard until 1810, when they followed John's former brother-in-law Hugh Stewart to Farmington, Maine (highlighted in red in this map of Maine). The move included John's three youngest children: Sarah, Thomas, and Holmes Stewart. John Daggett spent the rest of his life in Farmington, dying there in 1822 at the age of 78.

Holmes Stewart Daggett was 17 years old when he moved from Massachusetts to Maine with his father, brother and sister. During the War of 1812, his name appears on a list of privates in a militia which was "summoned to hold themselves in readiness to march to the sea-coast". His company waited for orders for four days in September 1814, but was not called into active service. The following year, 22 year old Holmes Daggett married

31 year old Mary Hartson Smith.

CAUTION.

ALL persons are cautioned against purchasing a Note of hand of the following description, viz. "Value received I promise to pay Holmes S. Daggett, or order eighty dollars four cents on demand with interest"—Dated Sept. 14, 1816; and signed by Ebenezer Sweet—as said note was originally given for eighty four cents and the word "dollars" has been inserted since it was signed.

EBENEZER SWEET.

Farmington, Oct. 8, 1816.

In 1816, Holmes Daggett became involved in a financial dispute with Ebenezer Sweet, a 72 year old longtime Farmington resident. According to a profile of Ebenezer Sweet in the "History of Farmington, Maine, from Its First Settlement to 1846": "He was a tanner by trade...Mr. Sweet was a man of industrious habits, and acquired a pecuniary independence." In 1816, Ebenezer Sweet placed an advertisement in the newspaper, which seems to accuse Holmes S. Daggett of trying to defraud him of almost eighty dollars:

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It would be interesting to know Holmes's side of the story behind this advertisement. Holmes and Mary went on to have 4 children: 3 sons (William Smith, John Minot, and Holmes Stewart) and one daughter (Mary Sewall). The 1820 census finds the Holmes Daggett household in Strong, Maine, about 10 miles north of Farmington; Holmes is listed as "engaged in agriculture". In 1836, the Daggett family moved to Houlton, Maine, about 150 miles northeast of Farmington near the New Brunswick border. The 1850 US census finds the family still in Houlton; Holmes's occupation was given as cordwainer, an old term for shoemaker.

In 1854, Holmes and Mary Daggett -- then in their 60s -- moved to Iowa, together with their daughter Mary Sewall Daggett, their sons John Minot Daggett and Holmes Stewart Daggett Jr., as well as John's and Holmes Jr.'s wives and children. The 1856 Iowa census shows Holmes Sr. and Mary living on a small farm in Linn County together with Holmes Jr., his family, and unmarried 32 year old Mary Sewall Daggett. The John Minot Daggett household is next door. Holmes Daggett Sr. died in Iowa in 1858 at the age of 65. Mary Hartson Smith Daggett died in Iowa the following year at the age of 75.