







A Brief Account
OF THE
Sufferings and Services
OF
Christopher Holder
FOR THE
Faith of Friends

Christopher Holder

(Copy of Autograph — 1659)

"I only know he heard God's voice
And crossed the sea to work for Him."

Christopher Holder, a young man, suffered such tortures for his faith as a Friend that he was known as "The Mutilated."

An Englishman of good birth and breeding—follower of George Fox and forerunner of William Penn—he gladly gave purse, body and mind for the aid of his faith.

His first attempts in Boston were short-lived, for he was immediately imprisoned and sent back to England. The next year he came again, and torture and banishment were his—but with them came triumph, for here in Sandwich he preached his message at the spot that bears his name—Christopher's Hollow in 1657—and here founded the Society of Friends in America. Among its original members were our ancestors by the name of Wing. Later, during his imprisonment in Boston, he wrote the First Declaration of the Faith of Friends.

Now into this austere young life had come romance. He was betrothed to Mary Scott of Providence Plantations—daughter of Richard Scott, a faithful Friend. Her mother, Katherine (Marbury) Scott, sister of Anne Hutchinson, had borne scourging and imprisonment for remonstrating with Governor Endicott against his treatment of Christopher Holder and the Friends.

So with Mary Dyer, that martyr that-was-to-be, Mary Scott and her friend, Hope Clifton, journeyed to Boston to offer cheer to those so dear to them in such distressful need. For their zeal all were cast into gaol.

Later, when Christopher Holder was banished from Boston "under pain of death, if he return," his betrothed, Mary Scott, (with her mother), joined him in "Old England," and there they were married.

At that time Charles the Second was on the throne, and among those high in his favor were Sir Christopher Wren (the architect), kinsman of

Christopher Holder and Sir John Dryden (the poet laureate), kinsman of Mary (Scott) Holder. Tradition says that partly through such powerful allies the king's ear was reached, and Christopher Holder's efforts in behalf of the persecuted Friends in America were successful.

When Christopher Holder and his wife returned to America, at least in part through their efforts the worship of God according to the faith of Friends no longer might mean death.

They dwelt for a while on Patience Island in Narragansett Bay. This island was the marriage dower of Mary (Scott) Holder from her father. It is a beautiful "green isle in the sea" (still owned by descendants), and for years was a refuge for the persecuted and oppressed. Here were born two daughters to Christopher Holder and his wife, Mary. The eldest (her mother's namesake) - is the one through whose descendants Christopher Holder is the ancestor of many of the Wing Family of America. Their married life was but a few years. Mary (Scott) Holder died and was buried at nearby Newport, in that place of peace, the Clifton burying-ground, given to the Friends by Thomas Clifton, father of Hope Clifton, that dear friend of Mary Scott, who had gone with her to see Christopher Holder, during his imprisonment in Boston.

So for his second marriage, it is pleasing to know, that he chose Hope Clifton.

During the troublous times of King Philip's War the people of Newport sought the advice of their townsman, Christopher Holder, though a man of peace and faith, undoubtedly one wise in counsel.

After the death of his wife, Hope, Christopher Holder left New England, where he had achieved so much for his faith, and ended his life of fragrant memory in Old England of his youth. It is good today to visit the beautiful Holder Memorial in Clinton, Massachusetts, erected by a descendant. There are gladly preserved all obtainable that pertain to the History of the Society of Friends in America, and its founder, Christopher Holder.

He, not unlike that young Saint Augustine, "came one time a missioning," and his mission has not been unfulfilled.

Written to be read at
Christopher's Hollow, in
Sandwich, Massachusetts,
at the
Reunion of the Wing Family
of America
by
William Arthur Wing
1908

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