

THE COFFIN FAMILY

England to Nantucket

The Coffin, or Coffyn as it was originally spelled, family comes from England. The line was probably originally Norman and came to England from France in the 1100s. They are probably descended from Sir William Coffyn of Devonshire who ties back to the Norman conquest of 1080.

The earliest members that I have information on are TRISTRAM and NICHOLAS COFFYN. They may have been brothers or Nicholas may have been Tristram's son, I am not certain. All that is known is that they left wills in Devonshire, England.

Tristram was probably born around 1525. His will was made on November 16, 1601 and was proved in Devonshire in 1602.

Nicholas wrote his will on February 9, 1613 and it was proved May 13, 1628 also in Devonshire. It mentioned his spouse Joan and tied in his son Peter. It is with this son, Peter, that I begin this history.

PETER COFFYN

Peter was born in Brixton in the County of Devonshire, England in about 1580 and remained there all his life.

In about 1604 or 1605, he married Joan Thember, also of Brixton. Joan was born about 1584 and was a daughter of Robert and Anne Thember.

Peter wrote his will on March 21, 1627 and it was proved on May 13, 1628. He died sometime between these two dates. In the old style calendar, March was the first month. These dates could represent a two month time span or a fourteen month time span. Hard to determine. At any rate he died and was buried in Brixton.

His spouse, Anne, outlived him and traveled to America with her son Tristram and died on Nantucket Island on May 30, 1661.

There were two daughters, **Eunice** and **Mary**, who also came to America with their mother and brother. There may have been other children, but all I have information on is the son Tristram, our ancestor.

TRISTRAM COFFYN

Tristram always used the spelling *Coffyn*, the subsequent generations used the current *Coffin* spelling. Tristram was born March 11, 1606 and was baptized March 11, 1610 in Brixton, Devon.

In 1630 he married Dionis Stevens of Brixton. Dionis was a daughter of Robert and Dionis Stevens of Brixton, Devon. She was baptized on March 4, 1609 and so was probably born a few years earlier.

In 1642, Tristram brought his two sisters, Eunice and Mary, his mother Anne, his spouse and his five children to Boston by boat. After arriving, they went north to Salisbury, Massachusetts for a short period. While there he ran an `ordinary' or pub. They then moved inland to the town of Pentucket (now Haverhill, Massachusetts). He was the first person to farm in this new area. He tired quickly of farming and applied for a new pub license in Newbury in 1647 and moved back to the Salisbury area in 1648. He settled in Newbury and ran a pub and a ferry. In 1654 they moved to Salisbury.

It was here in Salisbury that ten men got together and planned the purchase of the island of Nantucket. Tristram Coffyn was the leader of this group. The purchase of Nantucket by the ten first purchasers took place in 1659. He took his family to the island shortly thereafter and remained there until his death.

Tristram died on October 2, 1681. There are two possible dates for the death of his spouse Dionis, either October 16, 1676 or November 6, 1684. In either case she died on Nantucket as well as did her spouse.

Tristram and Dionis had nine children. Three of the sons, Peter, James and Stephen and one daughter, Mary are in our direct lineage.

Peter Coffin

Peter Coffin's connection to our direct line is through his son, Peter Junior, who married Abigail Starbuck. Their daughter, Abigail Coffin, married Jedediah Fitch. Jedediah's granddaughter, Eunice Fitch, married Benjamin Barnard and their daughter, Matilda Barnard, married Henry Canaday.

Peter was born in Brixton, Devonshire on July 18, 1630. In about 1655, he married Abigail Starbuck. Abigail was living with her parents in what is now Dover, New Hampshire (all part of the Massachusetts Colony at the time), so I assume the marriage took place there.

Peter settled in New Hampshire, then went for a short period to Nantucket in the mid 1670s. He returned to New Hampshire and settled in Exeter where he remained for the rest of his life. He was quite prominent and was Chief Justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court.

Peter Coffin died in Exeter on March 21, 1715. I have no information on the death of his spouse Abigail. They had ten children.

ABIGAIL COFFIN was born October 20, 1657 in Newbury, Massachusetts. She married Daniel Davidson of Ipswich in Newbury on December 16, 1673.

PETER COFFIN JR. was born in Dover, Massachusetts (now New Hampshire) on August 20, 1660. He married Elizabeth Starbuck in Newbury, Massachusetts on August 15, 1682. Elizabeth was a daughter of Nathaniel and Mary Starbuck. They moved later to Nantucket. For more on this family see the upcoming STARBUCK FAMILY HISTORY. Peter died on

Nantucket in February 1699, Elizabeth died there in 1706. They had seven children. **Abigail** was born July 9, 1683 and married Jedediah Fitch on September 13, 1701. This is our lineage and their story is contained in the FITCH FAMILY HISTORY in this work. **Tristram** was born April 26, 1683 and married Hannah Brown. **Nathaniel** was born March 26, 1687. **Samuel** was born February 26, 1689. **Barnabas** was born February 11, 1690. **Eunice** was born September 23, 1693 and married Ebenezer Gardner. **Jemima** was born November 19, 1695 and was married to William Swain.

JETHRO COFFIN was born September 16, 1663. He married Mary Gardner, daughter of John and Priscilla Gardner. He died in 1726, she on October 27, 1767. They had eight children all born on Nantucket. **Margaret** was born June 10, 1689 and was married to Rev. Samuel Terry and second to Rev. John Wilson. **Priscilla** was born December 26, 1691 and was married to John Gardner. **John** was born April 12, 1694. **Josiah** was born July 28, 1698 and married Elizabeth Coffin. **Abigail** was born February 12, 1700 and was married to Nathaniel Woodbury and then to Eliakim Swain. **Robert** was born April 24, 1704 and married Susanna Coffin. **Peter. Edward.**

TRISTRAM COFFIN was born January 18, 1665. He married Deborah Colcord.

ROBERT COFFIN was born in 1667. He married Joanna Dyer of Exeter, New Hampshire. They had no children.

EDWARD COFFIN was born February 20, 1669. He married Anna Gardner, a daughter of John and Priscilla Gardner. I have no information on children.

JUDITH COFFIN was born February 4, 1672.

PARNELL COFFIN died in infancy.

ELIZABETH COFFIN was born January 27, 1680. She married Col. John Gilman of Exeter, New Hampshire on June 5, 1698.

ELIPHALET COFFIN never married.

Tristram Coffin, Jr.

Tristram was born in England in 1632. He moved to America with his family settling first in Salisbury, Massachusetts and then in Dover in what is now New Hampshire. He married, in Newbury, Massachusetts, Judith Somerby, the widow of Henry Somerby. Judith was the daughter of Edmund and Sarah Greenleaf.

Tristram never went to Nantucket. He took over the family land in Newbury, Massachusetts and spent his life there. I have no other information except he was not a part of the Nantucket group.

Elizabeth Coffin

Elizabeth Coffin was born in England in 1634-5. She married Captain Stephen Greenleaf, son of Edmund and Sarah Greenleaf, in Newbury on November 13, 1651.

She did not go to Nantucket either and more than likely remained north of Boston in the Newbury or Salisbury area.

James Coffin

James Coffin was born in Brixton, Devonshire on August 12, 1640. He married Mary Severance in Salisbury, Massachusetts on December 3, 1663. Mary was a daughter of Col. John Severance and Mary Kimball of Salisbury. Both her parents were from Suffolk in England.

Our direct line connection to James is through his daughter, Abigail Coffin, who married Nathaniel Gardner. Nathaniel and Abigail's daughter, Judith Gardner, married Benjamin Barnard.

James was an Associate Proprietor, partner of his brother Peter in the purchase of Nantucket Island. He stayed on the island a short period and then returned to Dover, New Hampshire in 1670. In about 1672, he returned to Nantucket and remained there until his death. He was appointed the first Probate Judge on the island in 1680.

James Coffin died on the Island on July 28, 1720 and his wife Mary died about the same time. They had fourteen children.

MARY COFFIN was born in 1665. She was twice married, first to Richard Pinkham of Portsmouth, New Hampshire and then to James Gardner of Nantucket.

JAMES COFFIN was born in Dover, New Hampshire in about 1668. He married first Love Gardner, daughter of Richard and Sarah Gardner and then in 1692 married Ruth Gardner, daughter of John and Priscilla Gardner. He died August 2, 1741. By his first wife he had: **Benoni**. By his second wife he had: **George, Sarah, Nathan, Elisha, Joshua, Elizabeth, Priscilla, Mary, James, Ruth** and **Benjamin**.

NATHANIEL COFFIN was born in 1671 and married Demaris, daughter of William and Demaris Gayer in 1692. He died October 29, 1721. Demaris died September 6, 1764. Their children were: **Dorcas, Christian, Lydia, William, Charles, Benjamin, Gayer, Nathaniel** and **Catherine**.

JOHN COFFIN was born on Nantucket and married Hope Gardner, daughter of Richard and Sarah Gardner. He died July 1, 1747 and she died October 12, 1750. Their children were: **Richard, Peleg, Judith, Elias, Francis** and **Abigail**.

DINAH COFFIN was born on Nantucket and married Nathaniel Starbuck, Jr. on November 20, 1690. Nathaniel was born August 9, 1668 and was a son of Nathaniel Starbuck and Mary Coffin. She died October 1, 1750 and he on April 9, 1753. Their children were: **Mary, Paul, Priscilla, Elizabeth, Hephzibah, Abigail, Benjamin, Tristram, Ruth** and **Anna**.

DEBORAH COFFIN was born on Nantucket and married George Bunker on October 10, 1695. George was born April 22, 1671 and was a son of William Bunker and Mary Macy. He died in 1743. She died October 8, 1767. Their children were: **Daniel, John** and **Caleb**.

EBENEZER COFFIN was born March 30, 1678. He married Eleanor Barnard on December 12, 1700. She was a daughter of Nathaniel and Mary Barnard and a sister to our Benjamin Barnard. Ebenezer died October 17, 1730 and Eleanor died in 1769 at age ninety. Their children were: **Oliver, Prince, Love, Cromwell, Jane, Alexander, Valentine, Joseph, Kimball** and **Benjamin**.

JOSEPH COFFIN was born February 4, 1679. He married Bethiah Macy, daughter of John Macy and Deborah Gardner. Bethiah was born April 8, 1681 and died June 6, 1738. Joseph died September 14, 1719. Their children were: **Micah, Eunice, Zaccheus, Hezekiah, Jedidah, Miriam** and **Mary**.

ELIZABETH COFFIN was married to Jonathan Bunker, son of William and Mary, and then to Thomas Clark. She died on Nantucket on March 30, 1769.

BENJAMIN COFFIN was born on Nantucket on August 28, 1683. He was lost overboard on a voyage between Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard.

RUTH COFFIN married Joseph Gardner, son of Richard and Mary Gardner. She died on Nantucket May 28, 1748. He died in 1747. Their children were: **Bethuel, Charles, Shubael, Caleb, Patience** and **Margaret**.

ABIGAIL COFFIN was born on Nantucket in about 1672. She married Nathaniel Gardner in about 1690. Nathaniel was born November 16, 1669. He was a son of Richard Gardner and Sarah Shattuck. Abigail died on Nantucket on March 15, 1709. Nathaniel died in England after a voyage there in 1713. It is through their daughter, Judith Gardner, who married Benjamin Barnard that our direct connection comes through. The children of Nathaniel Gardner and Abigail Coffin were: **Hannah, Ebenezer, Peleg, Judith, Margaret, Nathaniel, Andrew, Abel** and **Susannah**.

EXPERIENCE COFFIN was born on Nantucket and died as a child.

JONATHAN COFFIN was born August 28, 1692. He married Hephzibah Harker, daughter of Ebenezer and Patience Harker on February 24, 1711. He died February 5, 1773 and she died December 30, 1773. Their children were: **Susannah, Ephraim, Henry, Daniel, Anna, Jonathan, James, Joshua, Hepzabeth** and **Mary**.

John Coffin

This John was born in England and died as an infant. There is a later child, also named John, that lived a full life. He is covered later.

Deborah Coffin

Deborah was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts on November 15, 1642 and died December 8th of the same year.

Mary Coffin

Mary was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts on February 20, 1645. In about 1662, she married Nathaniel Starbuck. Nathaniel was the eldest child of Edward Starbuck and Katherine Reynolds. Nathaniel was born April 20, 1635 in Derbyshire, England.

These two folks are also in our direct lineage through their daughter, Elizabeth Starbuck, who married Peter Coffin, junior. Peter and Elizabeth's daughter, Abigail Coffin, married Jedediah Fitch. Eunice Fitch married Benjamin Barnard and their daughter, Matilda Barnard, married Henry Canaday.

In his lifetime, Nathaniel was able to purchase three full shares of property and was the wealthiest and most influential man on the island. His wife Mary was a leader in the efforts to establish the *Society of Friends* or Quaker meeting on the island.

Mary Coffin Starbuck died November 13, 1717 and Nathaniel Starbuck died August 6, 1719. Both died in Nantucket.

They had ten children: **MARY, ELIZABETH, NATHANIEL, JETHRO, BARNABAS, EUNICE, PRISCILLA, HEPHZIBAH, ANN and PAUL.** The story of these children may be found in the upcoming STARBUCK FAMILY HISTORY.

John Coffin

John was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts October 30, 1647. He married Deborah Austin in about 1668. She was a daughter of Joseph Austin and Sarah Starbuck Austin.

John lived on Nantucket until about 1685. He then took his family over to Martha's Vineyard and lived in Edgartown for the rest of his life. The Coffin family of that island all descended from John and Deborah.

I do not know when John died, but Sarah died in Edgartown on April 4, 1718. They had the following children.

LYDIA COFFIN was born June 1, 1669 on Nantucket. She was married three times, first to John Logan, then to John Draper and then finally to Thomas Thaxter of Hingham, Massachusetts.

PETER COFFIN was born August 5, 1671. He was first married to Christian Condy and then to Hope Gardner, daughter of Joseph Gardner and Bethia Macy. Their children were: **Bartlett, Lydia, Abner, Tristram, Robert, Peter, Margaret, Jerusha, Hannah and Joseph.**

JOHN COFFIN JR. was born February 10, 1673.

LOVE COFFIN was born April 23, 1676. She never married.

ENOCH COFFIN was born in 1678 and he married Beulah Eddy about 1700. They lived and raised their seven children on Martha's Vineyard.

SAMUEL COFFIN was born about 1680 and in 1705 married Miriam Gardner, a daughter of Richard Gardner and Mary Austin. He died February 22, 1764 and she died September 17, 1750. Their children were: **Deborah, John, Libni, Parnel, Sarah, David, William, Miriam, Mary** and **Priscilla**.

HANNAH COFFIN was married to Benjamin Gardner, a son of Richard Gardner and Mary Austin. She died January 28, 1768.

TRISTRAM COFFIN was born about 1690 and married April 29, 1714 to Mary Bunker, a daughter of William Bunker and Mary Macy. Their children were: **David, Samuel, Tristram, Jonathan, John, Richard, Timothy, Mary** and **Matthew**.

DEBORAH COFFIN was married on June 18, 1708 to Thomas Macy, son of John Macy and Deborah Gardner. He died March 20, 1759 and she on September 23, 1760. Their children were: **Joseph, Robert, Love, Francis, Nathaniel, Lydia, Elizabeth, Thomas, Deborah, Anna** and **Hepzibah**.

ELIZABETH COFFIN never married.

BENJAMIN COFFIN was born October 23, 1683.

Stephen Coffin

Stephen Coffin was born in Newbury, Massachusetts on May 11, 1652. He was married on Nantucket on October 8, 1668 to Mary Bunker. Mary was a daughter of George Bunker and Jane Godfrey, and was born May 5, 1652 in Topsfield, Massachusetts.

This is a part of our direct lineage. Stephen and Mary's daughter, Susanna Coffin married Peleg Bunker and their daughter, Mary Bunker married Timothy Barnard. Their son, Benjamin Barnard married Eunice Fitch and their daughter, Matilda Barnard Married Henry Canaday.

Stephen took over his father's farm and lands on Nantucket and remained there all his life. Mary died May 21, 1724 and Stephen died November 14, 1734.

They had ten children, all born on Nantucket island.

DANIEL COFFIN was born about 1670. He was lost at sea in June of 1724.

DIONIS COFFIN was born September 21, 1671. She married Jacob Norton.

PETER COFFIN was born November 14, 1673. He moved to Boston where he was married. They had one child, **Daniel**.

STEPHEN COFFIN JR. was born February 20, 1675. He married Experience Look on November 21, 1693. She was a daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Look. Their children were: **Shubael, Zephaniah, Mary, Hepzabeth** and **Dinah**.

JUDITH COFFIN was first married to Peter Folger and then to Nathaniel Barnard Junior and then to Stephen Wilcox. She died on Nantucket on December 2, 1760.

SUSANNA COFFIN married Peleg Bunker on January 9, 1700. This is one of our lines. She died June 11, 1740, Peleg died June 1, 1730. Their children were: **Judith, Priscilla, Dinah, Mary** (who is our line) and **Jonathan**.

MEHITABLE COFFIN married Armstrong Smith a son of George and Jane Smith.

ANNA COFFIN married Solomon Gardner, son of Richard Gardner, jr. and Mary Austin. She died April 22, 1749.

HEPHZIBAH COFFIN married Samuel Gardner, son of James Gardner and Mary Starbuck.

PAUL COFFIN was born April 15, 1695. He married Mary Allen, daughter of Edward and Ann Allen. He was lost at sea in April of 1729. Their children were: **Peter, Mary** and **Isiah**.