

**DESCENDANTS OF THE FIRST  
JOHN FOLSOM, THROUGH  
DEA. JOHN, LIEUT. PETER,  
AND EPHRAIM FOLSOM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649013142

Descendants of the First John Folsom, Through Dea. John, Lieut. Peter, and Ephraim Folsom by  
Nathaniel Smith Folsom

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Cover @ 2017

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**NATHANIEL SMITH FOLSOM**

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DESCENDANTS

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DEA. JOHN, LIEUT. PETER, AND EPHRAIM  
FOLSOM.

By  
*Nathaniel Smith Folsom and Jacob Chapman*

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Reprinted from the NEW-ENGLAND HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL REGISTER  
for April, 1876.

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BOSTON:  
FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION.  
1876.

## P R E F A C E .

THE following paper originated from a conversation between the Rev. Nathaniel S. Folsom, and the Rev. Jacob Chapman, and from the known intention of the Rev. Mr. Chapman to prepare a book embracing a complete genealogy of the Folsom Family. The latter was advised to furnish an article for the Historical and Genealogical Register, with a view to obtain the cooperation of all interested in the object. It was accordingly furnished, confined strictly to "the first four generations" and within the "six printed pages" to which such articles are in general limited. It was then submitted to the senior writer's revision, who could not take it in hand until January of the present year. On consultation with friends it was thought advisable to introduce historical and biographical sketches—the additional expense being cheerfully borne by them. And then as it became known that a multitude of the Folsoms of the present generation would not be helped at all by a paper within the specified limits, it was deemed expedient to include all the names given in Mr. Kelley's Genealogy published many years ago in the "Exeter News Letter" (of which very few copies are in existence), in as full and perfect a form as possible. And so the paper grew in the senior writer's hands until it has swelled to more than four times the "six pages," embracing a large amount of new names and dates within the scope of the generations assigned to himself by Mr. Kelley as well as beyond them.

It was within the intent of the paper to record some representative of each living family traceable to the first John Folsom, and in particular any persons of talent, enterprise, or useful service, of whom information could be gained in season for publication by the month of April. Perhaps as much success has been obtained in this direction as could reasonably be expected. Still, the main object has been to help to something more complete yet to come. It is only the first fruits that are now gathered. The extent of the harvest-field may be imagined from a single point of view. Wishing to ascertain the status and antecedents of the founders of Folsomdale, Wyoming Co., N. Y., Mr. A. A. Folsom corresponded with a gentleman of that place, and finally learned their names—all prominent men (and they were three in number), Supervisors, Justice of the Peace, large property-holders; also that they originated from Tunbridge, Vt.; that their father (beyond whom he could not ascertain their pedigree) was Asa, brother of Jacob Folsom—the last leaving a family of "eleven sons and daughters who met their descendants and other relatives at a reunion in Tunbridge, in the month of August or September, 1871, to the number of three or four hundred." If they could only have come prepared with written genealogies of their families, to be recorded and preserved!

The kindness of postmasters and postmistresses is gratefully acknowledged, especially in the instance of finding a married sister of Capt. Folsom, of California, who, through her daughter, furnished a very full family-record, going back far enough to be easily connected with names found in Mr. Lancaster's History of Gilmanton, in direct descent from the first John Folsom. Nor could important portions of the article have been written without the valuable aid of Mr. John Ward Dean, the Librarian of the Historic Genealogical Society, and Editor of its periodical, in putting just the needed books before the writer for personal research; also of the Librarian of the Congregational Library. A constant correspondence has also been maintained with Rev. Mr. Chapman, who has already a more extensive collection of names, dates, &c., of the Folsoms than any other person in the country.

In taking his final leave, the senior writer earnestly asks the descendants of John Folsom to communicate names, dates (going back the farthest they can), occupations, biogra-

phical sketches, &c., to the Rev. Jacob Chapman, Kingston, N. H. Let them do this before the oldest generation now living shall pass away. Especially let efforts be made like that of Mr. Paul Foster Folsom (mentioned in note, p. 16), and the work of putting the various groups in lineal connection with the first John Folsom will be more practicable; whereas in their present state many of the names now in the hands of Mr. Chapman are utterly untraceable. That correspondence, proving that Benjamin F. was an ancestor two generations back of men still living who are over seventy years of age; that he went from Exeter or near neighborhood to Deerfield and thence with his family into Maine, was most important. And it agreed with a fact known from Deerfield records that a Benjamin F. had lived for a time in Deerfield, but of whom there was no other trace, and no other fact known. But who was Benjamin's father? Nobody could tell. The whole Genealogy of Mr. Kelley was ransacked. Every Benjamin named in it was brought into inquisition, until at last one was fixed on, and a pedigree made out that received the approval of the late Mr. Drake, so far as any could have it in the absence of explicit records. But later research, in the course of making up this present Genealogy of the "Folsom Family," revealed a flaw in the management of the ages so as perfectly to fit the Benjamin sought after. The whole was given up, and the conviction reluctantly reached that in Mr. Kelley's Genealogy, the fullest known, there was no trace of such a person. Still later, an examination of the brief record of the Folsoms of Gilmanton, in Mr. Lancaster's History of Gilmanton, which was the occasion of bringing, by continued research and inquiry, almost all the new matter found in the present paper on pp. 15-18 (also on p. 13, No. 6), disclosed children of John (son of Dea. John), who married Sarah Dudley; and among their children was a son Peter, father of Peter, Josiah, Abraham and Benjamin. But of the Benjamin the History said nothing further. This supplied the long missing link, and met every condition. The Genealogist will appreciate the remark when I add, that this cost nearly a week of close, arduous, perplexing research and study. Mr. Chapman will have some of this sort of work to do. Even with help and encouragement his whole work will be arduous, enthusiastic though he is in it; without encouragement, it will be impossible. Let every family pledge itself to purchase his book when completed. We trust he will be able to produce a companion-volume to the "Gilman Genealogy," that model of its class in form and method and general execution. If in five or in seven years from the present time he shall have published such a work, he will not fail to win the gratitude of his kinsmen, and to find a welcome also from many beyond them.

N. S. F.

## THE FOLSOM FAMILY.

ON the 26th of April, 1638, the ship "Diligent, of Ipswich," Eng., of 850 tons burden, John Martin, master, set sail from the mouth of the Thames for Massachusetts Bay, having on board nineteen families and six or eight single persons, in all one hundred and thirty-three. Twelve of these families, numbering eighty-four souls, were from old Hingham, the rest from the immediate vicinity; and they had all embarked for the purpose of joining a colony settled in Hingham, Mass., 1633-37 (consisting of ten families and five single persons, in all forty-nine), who had been their friends and neighbors in old Hingham. Among those now emigrating were John Foulsham of Hingham, then twenty-three or twenty-four years of age, and his young wife, to whom he had been married about a year and a half. They were attended by two servants. His wife's father and mother, Edward and Mary Clark Gilman, of Hingham, three younger brothers, Edward (not quite twenty-one years old), John and Moses; two younger sisters, Sarah, and Lydia (who married Daniel Cushing, 1645), and three servants of the family, were fellow-passengers. The rector of the parish, Rev. Robert Peck, with his family, consisting of wife, two children and two servants, also formed part of the company. The immediate occasion of their departure seems to have been trouble in ecclesiastical matters. Their rector, doubtless with the sympathy and aid of most of those constituting the emigrating party, had pulled down the rails of chancel and altar, and levelled the latter a foot below the church, as it remains to this day. Being prosecuted by Bishop Wren, he left the kingdom, together with his friends—who sold their estates at half their real value—promising to remain with them always.

In an account of the family, published forty or fifty years ago in the "Exeter News Letter," from which a large portion of names and dates in the present record has been taken, there is mentioned a tradition that "as several John Smiths were in the company, one of them who came from the town of Foulsham was, for the sake of being distinguished from the others, familiarly called 'John Foulsham,' and by this name, on his arrival in New-England, he chose to be known. So it became his and his posterity's name." Now there may be a real fact of a change or abridgment of name lying at the basis of the tradition. There is presumptive evidence, nay, fair proof of it, in an attestation, given by the compiler of the Exeter News Letter Genealogy, of his inspection of a deed signed by John Foulsham, 1672, and recorded in vol. xi. p. 287, in the Registry of Deeds for the Co. of Rockingham, in which some property is conveyed by John Foulsham to his daughter, commencing thus: "Whereas there is an Intent of marriage between George March, the son of Hugh March of Newbery and Mary Foulsham the daughter of John Foulsham, *alias* Smith, of Exeter.\*" Why the "alias" there, unless he had once borne the name "Smith," and now wished to make the bequest to his child forever indisputable? Assuming this to

\* A friend and kinsman, Nathaniel Shute, Esq., of Exeter, has kindly inspected this deed for us, and we give from his pen a more exact transcript in the text than the News Letter contains, together with the closing portion, here in this note.

"Know ye all men by these presents, that I the said John Foulsham in consideration of



have been his name when he embarked, the explanation given by the "News Letter" cannot be wholly accurate; for there is only one more "Smith" on the list of passengers, and his name was "Henry." There is, however, printed in the town records for 1633, as will be seen further on, the name of a "John Smith" associated with that of "John Foulsham." Where did he come from? In all probability he was one of the sons of the "Henry Smith" already mentioned; and two John Smiths—though there were not "several"—presented motive enough for distinguishing them in name if possible. But with full evidence that "Foulsham" had been for centuries a family name, as well as that of a parish, in Norfolk county; that it was written on monuments, in town-records and in history, there does not seem any probability that "John Smith" on his voyage across the Atlantic would drop the name "Smith," and take that of "Foulsham" from the name of a parish in the neighborhood of Hingham. By the change he put himself among the "Foulshams." A better explanation of the adoption of the name "John Foulsham" by the husband of Mary Gilman—if we must accept the change—is that he took the surname because it was his mother's maiden name, and possibly was his own middle name, though middle names were very rare in England at that time. In dropping the last word, his father's surname, he did what many have done, and are doing down to this day. He was nevertheless a lineal descendant of the Foulshams,

the said marriage do Give, grant, Covenant Hefsoffe and fully clearly and absolutely doe give unto the said George and Mary one hundred acres of land lying and being in said Exeter and bounded," &c. &c.

"In witness whereof I the above-said John Foulsham have set my hand and seal the eighteenth of May Anno Domini 1672. JOHN FOULSHAM."

"In the presence of  
John Gilman,  
Anthony Somerby."

There is in existence in the Norfolk (formerly part of Essex County, and part of the Province of New-Hampshire) Records of Deeds, Book 2, leaf 291, a copy of still another deed, given by the first John Folsom—for the two following paragraphs from which we are indebted to the kindness of the family of the late Mr. Charles Folsom.

"John Foulsham of Exeter [N. H.] in respect of y<sup>e</sup> paternal love and affection and fatherly care and good will of my trustie and well beloved sone Peter Foulsham of Exeter afores<sup>d</sup> and for ye future good and benefit of him and his posterity," gives him

"40 or 50 acres of land in Hingham in y<sup>e</sup> county of Norfolk [Eng.] near Norrald Comon and formerly callyd by y<sup>e</sup> name of Ffalsham at y<sup>e</sup> Boxbushes;—bounded W. with Norrald Comon, E. with great Langhames and little Langhams, N. with Hardingham Comon, S. E. with land of John Buck formerly and Edward Flower formerly." "10 April, 1673."

In possession of the same family is a fac-simile of an autograph of John Folsom, penned the year he died, and showing another way of spelling the name, as follows: "John Foulsham, 1681."

The definite location of the "land in Hingham" is worthy of notice. It may assist in gaining a correct conception of it, to consider that "Hingham was once the head town of a deanery, and contained 43 parishes." "Falsham" seems to have been one of these outlying parishes; and the deed proves that the first John Folsom had land there as well as in "Hackford-by-Hingham," as the latter place was sometimes called by way of distinction. The appellation "Fulsam at the Box-bushes" suggests a site where the Box-shrub abounded, and was planted as an ornament of garden and lawn, perhaps an ancient home of his ancestors—the buildings long gone—one of the freeholds gained by purchase or gift in the parishes in which the manors of the noblemen were a motley only. The De Marshalls and Morleys had "manors in Folesham" from 1202 to 1580. The De Poulings had "tees" there in 1324. (See for these various statements, "Blomefield's County of Norfolk," vol. 2.) It was also an "advowson" (i. e. with right attached of appointing to a church-living), a "demesne" (the nobleman's tenants being exempt from tolls and taxes), &c., and the names of the bordering parishes of Hardingham, Langham and Norrald (Northwold, where it is stated that "the site of a manor" had become "a pasture-close"), can be all identified. Perhaps the land had been kept so long because of the dear associations connected with it. He remembered the fragrance and greenness of its shrubbery. And now, eight years before his death, he will not alienate the ancestral possession from his family, but bestows it onto one of his sons. The father's tribute to the good qualities of the son supplies valuable testimony of character in the absence of any other record.

worthily to be the founder of the Folsom family in America, and fit to transmit the vigorous pulsations of his ancestral blood to future generations.\*

The party having landed at Boaton, Mass., Aug. 10, 1638, immediately proceeded to their place of destination, about fourteen miles S. E. from Boston. An Adam Foulsham, probably a son of the Adam who died in 1627, and a cousin, if not brother, of John Foulsham, came from Hingham, Eng., to Hingham, Mass., in 1639, but returned to England and died 1670. Their rector remained about three years, when hearing that the bishops were deposed, he returned to England in 1641† (the date given by Daniel Cushing), resumed his rectory, and died 1636. Edward Gilman had with others obtained a grant of land eight miles square in a place now called Rehoboth, near the Rhode Island line, in 1641. In 1647 his name is recorded in Ipswich. Soon afterward he went to Exeter, N. H., where his sons were already established in business. John Folsom and wife, with their children, followed her father and mother to Exeter, probably not earlier than 1650; the first authentic record of their residence in that town being in the year 1655.

During the twelve or fifteen years' residence of John Foulsham in Hingham, Mass., he was not without tokens of the good will of the people.

\* As to the original derivation of the name FOLSHAM, Hon. George Folsom, in one of the MSS. left by him, says "It arose, upon the adoption of surnames in England, from the town of Foulsham, a village in the county of Norfolk, England [six or eight miles north of Hingham], in which county the family was for many centuries, possessing estates in fifteen different places." Thus, John of Foulsham became John Foulsham.

The orthography and pronunciation of the name have varied in the family itself, as well as among others writing and pronouncing it. The first Anglo-American bearing the name spelt it "Foulsham." His son, Dea. John, wrote it "Fulsom" in 1709, and it is so signed in his last will, 1715. In one instance in the Hingham town records it is spelt "Fulsham," but always afterward "Foulsham." In the Exeter records it is uniformly written "Folsom" from the year 1679, with one exception in 1681, when the town clerk wrote "Foulshame." In the records of the First Parish, Haverhill, Mass., 1749-54, it is spelt "Foulsham," "Foulsham," "Folsham," and "Folsom," on occasion of the baptism of children of "Josiah Foulsham." Originally it was doubtless spelt "Foulshame"—its etymological significance being the *Fovis hame*, or breeding-place, or mart. The old syllabic division must have been Fovis-hame, the final syllable becoming shortened into "ham," with the first letter silent, pronounced like *um*, as may now often be noticed in words of that termination. A further shortening appears in 1504—how extensively practised is uncertain—in a Latin inscription on a monumental stone in the floor of the church of Repps, Norfolk co., which translated is, "Pray for the soul of Mr. Thomas Folsom, Baccalaureate of the Chapel (Hist. of Norfolk Co., vol. xi. p. 182). This last mode of spelling appears on modern maps of England, designating the town. But everywhere it is now written *Folsom* by those hearing the name.

In regard to the pronunciation of this word, it is now generally pronounced by the family quite like *scholosome* (the writer has never known but one exception). And we suggest that this is a preservation of the old way of pronouncing the name; that in the first syllable "Fovis" the diphthong "ou" was sounded as in "souls, poultry," &c. Certain it is that this old spelling—*fovis* (or *fovis*)—of our modern word "fowls," occurs in Chaucer—as in his "House of Fame," and in his "Legend of Nine Good Women":—

"As this foule when hit beheld,"  
"I hear the foules slog."

Our suggestion is, moreover, fully borne out by similar phenomena of pronunciation in modern times. We hear "bowling-alley" (once written *bowling-alley*, and the sphere or ball, *bowle*) pronounced in two ways, with the first syllable like "ow" in *howl* and in the drinking-vessel *bowl*. "Johnson, Elphinstone and Perry declare for the former, i. e. as in *howl*; Sheridan, Scott, Rennell and Smith pronounce it like *hole*. Garrick corrected Walker for pronouncing it like "howl."—(Early English Pronun., vol. i. p. 152.) Even the pronunciation of the word when written as Dea. John Folsom wrote it, "Fulsom," has authority in the old pronunciation of the word "Cowper," like that of *coward* (a hush) as now heard, with the ou as in "group," or possibly nearer the sound of *o-oo*—the sound of the *ou* in "Cowper" as in *howl* being "given it only by those who do not know the family."

† In Mr. Blomefield's "County of Norfolk," vol. 2, p. 425, it is stated that he "came back to Hingham in the year 1645, after ten years voluntary banishment."

It is quoted from Daniel Cushing's Records in Sprague's Genealogy, Appendix, p. 50, that "there was given him by the Town, four acres of Land butting upon the Playne eastward and upon the Common westward;" and the author of the Genealogy mentions that "the house standing upon this lot [1828] was built by Foulsham before Daniel Cushing was Town-clerk [1689]—the frame is of sawed oak-timber. My grandfather," the author adds, "bought it in 1744 of Daniel Beal—my father left it in 1800; the Spragues own it at present." This house was taken down in 1875, and some of its sawed oak manufactured into memorial chairs. Another record is quoted of the 30th of January, 1645, that "the seven or nine men chosen to order the prudential affairs of the town shall be chosen out of *the body of the Town*, as well non-Freemen as Freeman;" and the seven chosen were "Thomas Josselyn, George Marsh, Thomas Gill, John Tower, John Smith, John Foulsham, William Sprague." And again, "it is ordered & agreed upon by the town that Capt. Joshua Hubbard and John Foulsham shall have liberty of the two rivers, Rocky Meadow & Bound Brook Rivers, so far as the town hath property, to build & maintain a saw-mill or mills."

It is related in the Exeter News Genealogy that in 1645 there arose some "troublesome business," as Gov. Winthrop calls it in reference to himself personally; a man named Emes, who had been lieutenant of Hingham, having been appointed captain by the government, but rejected by the people, who elected Allen in his stead. Winthrop, then lieutenant-governor, insisted that Emes should be obeyed as commanding officer; the people insisted upon having Allen for their captain, and, "speaking evil of dignities," asked, "What have magistrates to do with us?" protesting also that they would die at the sword's point if they might not have the choice of their own officers. The result was a requisition on some of the leaders to give security for appearance at court, and on their refusal a commitment to prison. In turn, the friends of the imprisoned arraigned Winthrop for assumption of power and illegal imprisonment. The affair terminated in the acquittal of the deputy governor; and a fine of £155½ was imposed on about ninety persons, £20 of which John Foulsham was sentenced to pay. By some means he was finally exempted; for his name does not appear among the censured and fined.

After his removal to Exeter, the name of "Goodman Folsom" appears in 1659 on the list of "selectmen." He obtained a grant of land, 1660; his sons also all obtained similar grants in years following; he was a jurymen, 1662. In July, 1665, being one of a committee representing Dover, Portsmouth, Exeter and Hampton, to consult on certain political grievances, he presented "a petition to the King's Majesty," for consideration by the committee, praying that they "might be governed by the laws of England," and expressing "joy that the King had sent over Commissioners into these parts," and "sorrow that the Commissioners were evilly entertained by the Bay Government." Connected with this, and showing further action in the matter, it is recorded in volume i. of the Provincial Papers of New Hampshire, p. 280, without date, but about 1665, that "testimonies of selectmen are made that John Foulsham, Sen., and three others, Abraham Corbitt, Robert Burnham and Edward Hilton, are principal actors in trying to procure hands to be taken off [i. e. to sign off] from the Bay Government." In 1776, he and his brother-in-law, Moses Gilman, disagreed about their boundary-lines, and the latter, in a passion, pulled up a parcel of fence that stood between their lands. "John Sen'r" instantly entered his complaint; the case was "respite'd" a few days